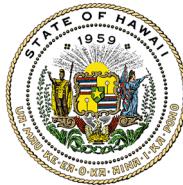


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GOVERNOR
KE KIA'AINA



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MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR OF
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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2292 HD1,
RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
LABOR

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

February 17, 2026

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice-Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) respectfully submits testimony in strong **SUPPORT** of House Bill 2292 HD1, which authorizes HIEMA to convert temporary special project positions into permanent positions exempt from civil service.

This measure is critical for ensuring operational stability and continuity in Hawai'i's emergency management efforts. Hawai'i faces unique vulnerabilities due to its geographic isolation, reliance on fragile lifelines, and exposure to natural and human-caused hazards. HIEMA's current reliance on temporary positions risk losing highly trained personnel and institutional knowledge during prolonged recovery efforts.

By allowing HIEMA to establish permanent exempt positions, this bill will:

- Ensure workforce stability and reduce turnover, promoting continuity in emergency management operations.
- Preserve institutional expertise necessary for effective disaster response and mitigation.

- Reduce administrative burden associated with repeatedly refilling temporary positions.

Importantly, this proposal will enhance the state's ability to safeguard lives, property, and the environment. Based on additional considerations, HIEMA strongly supports this measure, which will ultimately strengthen Hawai'i's resilience and preparedness.

I urge the committee to pass this measure to bolster Hawai'i's emergency management capabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of House Bill 2292 HD1.

James Barros: james.barros@hawaii.gov; 808-733-4300

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

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TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2292 HD1
RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

BY

MAJOR GENERAL STEPHEN F. LOGAN
ADJUTANT GENERAL AND
DIRECTOR OF HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

February 16, 2026

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice-Chair Lee, and members of the committee:

The Department of Defense provides written testimony in **SUPPORT** of **HB2292 HD1**.

This bill will authorize the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) to convert temporary exempt special project positions to permanent positions exempt from civil service.

Instability within the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), including leadership changes, funding disruptions, and shifting priorities, create significant risk for Hawai'i. These temporary exempt special project positions are a critical component in recovery operations as the disaster recovery process often takes years to secure full federal reimbursements. HIEMA remaining dependent on temporary special project positions puts the state at risk of losing key personnel and continuity.

This bill will authorize conversion of temporary exempt positions to permanent exempt positions, ensuring continuity regardless of federal changes; provide long-term stability for disaster recovery operations, which often last 5 to 10 years for large disaster, and in cases such as the Kilauea Lava disaster can even extend beyond a decade; and strengthen Hawai'i's emergency management workforce, enabling rapid and effective response to all-hazard incidents.

In our meeting with HGEA, they indicated that they were not opposed to the intent of this bill, and we are hopeful there is a path and room to move this bill forward.

For these reasons, I humbly ask for your support with this measure.

MG Stephen F. Logan, Stephen.f.logan@hawaii.gov; 808-672-1001

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Labor

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 17, 2026

H.B 2292, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

The Hawai'i Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO (HGEA), submits the following comments on H.B. 2292, H.D. 1 which authorizes the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency to convert temporary special project positions created for Federal Emergency Management Agency funded disaster recovery operations into permanent positions exempt from civil service, subject to certain limitations.

HGEA recognizes the critical mission of the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) and the need for a stable, experienced workforce to support disaster preparedness, response, and long-term recovery operations. While some positions within HIEMA may fit the criteria for permanent exemption given their highly unique and specialized duties, support service positions and positions that already have an existing civil service classification should not be permanently exempted. We believe the H.D. 1 is a strong step in the right direction which allows HIEMA the flexibility to hire and employ highly specialized positions, while converting support staff and positions that already have an existing civil service classification to civil service within five years.

However, we would like to request the following amendments (highlighted in red) to ensure that an incumbent employee's position is protected if they are converted into a civil service position, and specify that HIEMA shall convert at least thirty percent of these exempt positions, outlined in this measure, to civil service within five years:

- Section 3, Subsection (f) on Page 19
 - o The agency, with the approval of the governor and subject to positions authorized by the legislature, may establish permanent special project positions exempt from chapters 76 that are created for Federal Emergency Management Agency funded disaster recovery operations. At least thirty

percent of the special project positions will be transitioned to civil service over a period not to exceed five years. Provided that if an incumbent employee's position is converted to a civil service position, that employee shall experience no loss in position, rights and benefits, and salary.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on H.B. 2292, H.D. 1.

Respectfully submitted,



Randy Perreira
Executive Director