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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 3109 SD1
RELATING TO THE HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

BY

MAJOR GENERAL STEPHEN F. LOGAN
ADJUTANT GENERAL AND
DIRECTOR OF THE HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

February 25, 2026

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Morikawa, and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of SB3109 SD1.**

This measure prioritizes the safety and resilience of Hawai'i's communities. As our state faces increasing threats from hurricanes, wildfires, flooding, and other natural and man-made disasters, a clear and effective emergency management structure is essential to protect lives and property. This bill improves the readiness of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) by establishing a clearly defined leadership role with responsibility and authority commensurate with statewide emergency management. The current HIEMA Administrator has greater responsibilities than other administrators in the department and already functions and acts like a deputy director, similar to the deputies of Harbors, Airports and Highways, for the Department of Transportation. This change aligns the organizational structure to support seamless response and coordination among state, county, and federal partners during disasters and emergencies as the department is currently operating, and will clarify the department's organizational structure.

Furthermore, including this position in the Commission on Salaries' recommendations appropriately recognizes the critical nature of this executive position and will ensure the state will be able to recruit and retain highly qualified and experienced leadership.

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

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HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

February 25, 2026

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide **SUPPORT** testimony on Senate Bill 3109 SD1, which establishes the Administrator of the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) as the Deputy Director of Emergency Management within the Department of Defense, under the direction of The Adjutant General (TAG).

Hawai'i faces an increasing frequency and complexity of natural and human-caused disasters—including wildfires, hurricanes, flooding, and other emergencies—that demand swift, coordinated, and effective leadership. The current leadership structure at HIEMA, with the Administrator as a separate position, lacks the clearly defined operational authority and chain of command necessary to meet this growing challenge.

Drawing upon the proven organizational model of the Department of Transportation, where a Director is supported by Deputy Directors each with operational authority over distinct divisions, this bill rightly converts the Administrator role into a Deputy Director position within the DOD.

This restructuring clarifies authority and strengthens the chain of command, ensuring decisive leadership and faster decision-making during crises:

- **Improved Coordination:**
The Deputy Director will serve as the first assistant to the Director (or TAG), enhancing coordination across state, county, and federal emergency management partners. This alignment fosters seamless cooperation across jurisdictions and agencies.
- **Clear Operational Authority:**
Vesting operational authority in the Deputy Director role strengthens day-to-day management of HIEMA and accelerates response capabilities during emergencies.
- **Enhanced Chain of Command:**
By clarifying that the Deputy Director reports to the Director within the Department of Defense, the bill removes ambiguity in leadership and facilitates rapid, authoritative action.
- **Consistency with Best Practices:**
This organizational structure aligns with best practices used by other states and federal emergency management agencies, positioning Hawai'i to better manage complex disaster scenarios.

I strongly urge this Committee to support SB3109 SD1. Establishing the Deputy Director of Emergency Management under the Department of Defense's Adjutant General is a critical step toward a more responsive, coordinated, and effective emergency management system for our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 3109 SD1.

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