
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO DETERMINE AND CLEARLY
DEFINE JURISDICTIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR HONOPOU BRIDGE AND
TAKE COORDINATED ACTION TO ADDRESS RELATED SAFETY, WILDFIRE
RISK, AND EMERGENCY ACCESS CONCERNS.

1 WHEREAS, Honopou Bridge, located along Honopou Road in east
2 Maui, provides critical access for residents, agricultural
3 operators, cultural practitioners, and emergency responders
4 serving properties makai of the bridge; and
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6 WHEREAS, Honopou Road traverses parcels of mixed ownership,
7 and a 2007 report issued pursuant to Act 107, Session Laws of
8 Hawaii 2006 (Act 107), identified Honopou Bridge as being
9 situated within a parcel owned by the State and under the
10 jurisdiction of the Department of Land and Natural Resources;
11 and
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13 WHEREAS, the bridge was originally designed in 1990 for the
14 Department of Land and Natural Resources with a load capacity of
15 approximately five tons; and
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17 WHEREAS, following community safety concerns and
18 legislative review, the Department of Land and Natural Resources
19 gathered new structural engineering advice and concluded that,
20 without improvements or maintenance, the vehicle load rating
21 could be increased to thirteen tons if vehicle speeds were kept
22 below five miles per hour; and
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24 WHEREAS, Act 107 further required the Department of
25 Transportation to review safety issues and determine the cost of
26 strengthening the bridge to allow the safe passage of the Maui
27 County Fire Department; and
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29 WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation reported that the
30 bridge was originally designed as an emergency replacement for a



1 failed wooden bridge in 1994 for significantly lighter loads,
2 approximately five tons, which is below the weight of modern
3 fire apparatus and other emergency response vehicles, and
4 recommended increasing the load capacity to approximately twenty
5 tons; and

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7 WHEREAS, east Maui communities are geographically isolated
8 and face heightened vulnerability to wildfire, flooding, severe
9 weather, and medical emergencies; and

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11 WHEREAS, recent catastrophic wildfires in Maui have
12 underscored the urgent need to ensure reliable ingress and
13 egress routes for evacuation and emergency response; and

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15 WHEREAS, limitations on bridge load capacity may restrict
16 or delay fire engines, water tenders, ambulances, law
17 enforcement vehicles, and utility repair trucks, thereby
18 increasing risk to life, property, and critical infrastructure;
19 and

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21 WHEREAS, pursuant to chapter 127A, Hawaii Revised Statutes,
22 the State has a duty to ensure adequate emergency management and
23 disaster preparedness to protect public health and safety; and

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25 WHEREAS, article XI, section 1, of the Hawaii State
26 Constitution establishes the public trust doctrine and affirms
27 the State's obligation to protect and preserve natural resources
28 and related public interests; and

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30 WHEREAS, prolonged jurisdictional ambiguity has contributed
31 to delays in implementing structural upgrades necessary to
32 ensure adequate emergency response capacity for Honopou Bridge;
33 now, therefore,

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35 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
36 Thirty-third Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session
37 of 2026, that the Department of Land and Natural Resources and
38 Department of Transportation are urged to determine and clearly
39 define jurisdictional responsibility for Honopou Bridge and take
40 coordinated action to address related safety, wildfire risk, and
41 emergency access concerns; and



1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Land and
2 Natural Resources and Department of Transportation are urged to:

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4 (1) Conduct meaningful community outreach, including
5 public meetings, stakeholder consultations, and
6 community surveys of affected residents and landowners
7 in east Maui, to gather input related to the Honopou
8 Bridge on safety concerns, emergency access needs,
9 wildfire evacuation considerations, and preferred
10 infrastructure solutions;
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12 (2) Conduct or update a comprehensive assessment of the
13 Honopou Bridge's structural condition, load capacity,
14 and wildfire evacuation access needs, including
15 community input regarding the need for and
16 desirability of improved access;
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18 (3) Identify any current restrictions affecting emergency
19 vehicle access;
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21 (4) Develop and implement a coordinated repair,
22 rehabilitation, or replacement plan sufficient to
23 safely accommodate modern emergency response vehicles;
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25 (5) Identify estimated costs and potential funding
26 sources, including capital improvement project funding
27 and federal disaster mitigation or resilience
28 programs; and
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30 (6) Submit a report of their findings and implementation
31 timeline to the Legislature no later than twenty days
32 prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2027;
33 and
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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
36 Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Board of
37 Land and Natural Resources and Director of Transportation.

