
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO STATE BUILDINGS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that with warmer ocean
2 temperatures caused by climate change, the development zone for
3 hurricanes in the eastern and central Pacific has moved
4 northward, significantly increasing the potential for stronger
5 storms and hurricanes crossing the Pacific Ocean to hit or
6 directly affect the State. Previously, the State had been
7 protected by surrounding cooler waters and wind shear, which
8 mitigated the threat of hurricanes. However, ocean temperatures
9 around the State have grown warmer, reducing the number of days
10 during which the State experiences trade winds from two hundred
11 ninety-one in 1973 to two hundred ten in 2009. This reduction
12 in trade winds has dramatically decreased the protection
13 provided by wind shear, thereby raising the risk of future
14 hurricanes.

15 The legislature also finds that warmer seas have increased
16 the intensity of hurricanes globally. Crucially, Category 5
17 hurricanes have become increasingly common, with some achieving



1 wind speeds of over two hundred miles per hour. Category 5
2 hurricanes have caused extensive damage to buildings and
3 residential structures. Notably, when hurricane Melissa hit
4 Jamaica in 2025, over one hundred thousand structures were
5 severely damaged by the storm.

6 The legislature additionally notes that the number of
7 adequate shelters in the State is limited. In 2022, the city
8 and county of Honolulu had sufficient shelter capacity for only
9 one hundred thousand people, due to the county's lack of
10 shelters that meet the appropriate criteria in the event of a
11 hurricane. This lack of shelter space, combined with the high
12 risk of damage to residential structures, leaves the State
13 vulnerable to hurricanes and other severe storms. If a
14 hurricane of Category 3 or higher were to directly affect the
15 State, many residents could be left without shelter.

16 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to improve the
17 State's preparedness for stronger hurricanes by requiring
18 certain state buildings with the intent of serving a secondary
19 purpose as an emergency shelter, including public school,
20 college, and university buildings, designed on or after July 1,



1 2027, to be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and be
2 used as shelters in the event of an emergency.

3 SECTION 2. Section 107-27, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended to read as follows:

5 "~~§107-27~~ **Design of state buildings.** (a) No later than
6 one year after the adoption of codes or standards pursuant to
7 section 107-24(c), the design of all state building construction
8 shall be in compliance with the Hawaii state building codes~~[r~~
9 ~~except]~~; provided that state building construction [~~shall~~] may
10 be [~~allowed to be~~] exempted from:

11 (1) County codes that have not adopted the Hawaii state
12 building codes;

13 (2) Any county code amendments that are inconsistent with
14 the minimum performance objectives of the Hawaii state
15 building codes or the objectives enumerated in this
16 part; or

17 (3) Any county code amendments that are contrary to code
18 amendments adopted by another county.

19 (b) Exemptions shall include county ordinances allowing
20 the exercise of indigenous Hawaiian architecture adopted in
21 accordance with section 46-1.55.



1 ~~[(e) The State shall consider hurricane resistant criteria~~
2 ~~when designing and constructing new public schools for the~~
3 ~~capability of providing shelter refuge.~~

4 ~~(d)]~~ (c) Beginning July 1, 2023, where feasible and
5 cost-effective, the design of all new state building
6 construction shall:

- 7 (1) Maximize energy and water efficiency measures;
- 8 (2) Maximize energy generation potential; and
- 9 (3) Use building materials that reduce the carbon
10 footprint of the project.

11 (d) All state buildings with the intent of serving a
12 secondary purpose as an emergency shelter shall be designed to
13 withstand Category 5 hurricanes and be used as shelters in the
14 event of an emergency, provided that they:

- 15 (1) Are fully enclosed;
- 16 (2) Are large capacity shelters; and
- 17 (3) Will be designed on or after July 1, 2027.

18 For the purposes of this subsection:

19 "Fully enclosed" means the entire space between a floor and
20 a ceiling that is enclosed on all sides by walls, windows, or
21 other solid barriers, exclusive of doors or passageways, that



1 extend from the floor to the ceiling, so that the space is not
2 open to the elements.

3 "Large capacity shelter" means a shelter designed,
4 intended, or operated to provide temporary shelter to a number
5 of persons that meets or exceeds the occupant load established
6 for the facility under the applicable building or fire code, as
7 determined by the authority having jurisdiction.

8 "Shelter" means a facility, including a building or
9 structure, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary
10 shelter for individuals or families.

11 "State buildings" does not include correctional facilities,
12 covered playgrounds, or sheds.

13 (e) The department of accounting and general services
14 shall be the lead agency for the purposes of enforcing
15 subsection (d) in consultation with the Hawaii emergency
16 management agency.

17 (f) The department of accounting and general services
18 shall adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91 necessary to carry out
19 the purposes of subsection (d)."

20 SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
21 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.



1 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2525.

2



Report Title:

DAGS; HI-EMA; Hurricane Preparedness; Category 5; State Buildings; Shelters; Lead Agency; Rules

Description:

Requires certain state buildings with the intent of serving a secondary purpose as an emergency shelter and designed on or after July 1, 2027, to be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and be used as shelters in the event of an emergency. Designates the Department of Accounting and General Services as the lead agency in enforcing this requirement in consultation with the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency. Requires the Department to adopt rules. Effective 1/1/2525. (SD1)

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