

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 12, 2026

RE: H.B. No. 2554
H.D. 1

Honorable Nadine K. Nakamura
Speaker, House of Representatives
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Madame:

Your Committee on Public Safety, to which was referred H.B. No. 2554 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO SEARCH AND RESCUE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to establish, within the Office of the Governor, the Office of the State Search and Rescue Coordinator to review, assess, coordinate, prepare, and manage plans and resources for search and rescue operations statewide.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Hawai'i SAR Alliance and one individual. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Office of Information Practices.

Your Committee finds that current search and rescue efforts are fragmented across more than a dozen federal, state, county, and volunteer agencies and jurisdictions and operate largely in a reactive posture, with no single entity responsible for statewide strategy, standards, or accountability. Your Committee further finds that this decentralized model lacks standardized protocols, unified training requirements, and a single point of contact to provide daily centralized oversight and administrative accountability for interagency communication and mission-critical coordination for urban, maritime, and wilderness search and rescue



operations as well as missing person investigations. As a result, operations are often slowed by jurisdictional confusion, duplicative responses, gaps in coverage, and the inconsistent use of modern technology and best practices. This measure is intended to address these shortcomings in Hawaii's existing search and rescue system.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Explicitly establishing the Office of the State Search and Rescue Coordinator within the Office of the Governor as a temporary pilot program;
- (2) Repealing the pilot program on June 30, 2031;
- (3) Changing its effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2554, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2554, H.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Public Safety,



DELLA AU BELATTI, Chair



