

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 20 , 2026

RE: H.B. No. 2581
H.D. 2

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

Madame:

Your Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs, to which was referred H.B. No. 2581, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to clarify that the emergency powers granted to the Governor and county mayors are strictly limited to situations that involve responding to the sudden occurrence of disasters or emergencies of tremendous severity and destructiveness resulting from natural or human-caused hazards.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from E Ola Kakou Hawai'i/Malama:Cummings God Trust; Grassroot Institute of Hawaii; Kupuna for the Moopuna; Sierra Club of Hawai'i; Earthjustice; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency.

Your Committee finds that emergency authority should be reserved for responding to sudden and catastrophic events, rather than long-term public policy challenges. This measure clarifies the definitions of "disaster" and "emergency" to ensure that emergency powers are used only in circumstances involving abrupt and severe threats requiring immediate action.



Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Defining the term "catastrophic harm";
- (2) 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 Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2581, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it be referred to your Committee on Finance in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2581, H.D. 2.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Judiciary &
Hawaiian Affairs,



DAVID A. TARNAS, Chair



Record of Votes of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

Bill/Resolution No.: HB2581 HDI	Committee Referral: PBC, JHA, FIN	Date: 2/18/2026		
<input type="checkbox"/> The committee is reconsidering its previous decision on the measure.				
The recommendation is to: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended (as is) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments (HD) <input type="checkbox"/> Hold <input type="checkbox"/> Pass short form bill with HD to recommit for future public hearing (recommit)				
JHA Members	Ayes	Ayes (WR)	Nays	Excused
1. TARNAS, David A. (C)	✓			
2. POEPOE, Mahina (VC)	✓			
3. BELATTI, Della Au	✓			
4. COCHRAN, Elle		✓		
5. HASHEM, Mark J.				✓
6. KAHALOA, Kirstin	✓			
7. SAYAMA, Jackson D.				✓
8. TAKAYAMA, Gregg	✓			
9. GARCIA, Diamond	✓			
10. SHIMIZU, Garner M.		✓		
TOTAL (10)	6	2	0	2
The recommendation is: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted If joint referral, _____ did not support recommendation. committee acronym(s)				
Vice Chair's or designee's signature: <i>[Signature]</i>				
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