

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2944

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR - 6 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2109
S.D. 2

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2026
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Ways and Means, to which was referred S.B. No. 2109, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMUNICATIONS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to improve the State's emergency preparedness.

More specifically, this measure:

- (1) Requires the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to develop and implement a statewide public education and communications program to promote household emergency preparedness consistent with the Agency's fourteen-day essential supplies recommendation; and
- (2) Requires the Governor and Mayor of each county to:
 - (A) Provide an American Sign Language interpreter during each live broadcast press conference in which a Mayor or Governor makes a proclamation pursuant to a state of emergency;



- (B) Ensure to the fullest extent that the sign language interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands are visible during the broadcast; and
- (C) Provide a standardized pool feed that includes the sign language interpreter in a picture-in-picture window not less than one quarter the size of the primary video and not blocked or covered by captions, graphics, or other on-screen text.

Your Committee received written comments in support of this measure from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Disability and Communication Access Board, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, Hawaiian Humane Society, Hawaii Food Industry Association, Hawaii Food+ Policy, The Legal Clinic, Roots Reborn Maui, Hawaii Coalition for Immigrant Rights, and six individuals.

Your Committee finds that emergency preparedness is a critical element of statewide resilience and continuity during natural disasters, pandemics, supply chain disruptions, and other emergencies. The State is geographically remote and faces heightened risks from delays in external response and support during major disasters, increasing the importance of household self-sufficiency and advanced readiness. Your Committee further finds that this measure will help strengthen public readiness in alignment with Hawaii Emergency Management Agency recommendations. Your Committee also finds that equitable communication during emergencies is a matter of statewide concern and that this measure will help ensure the availability of certified American Sign Language interpreters to translate public announcements for deaf and hearing-impaired persons.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Requiring the fourteen-day emergency preparedness program to be developed and implemented by July 1, 2027;
- (2) Requiring the Agency to submit annual reports to the Legislature beginning in 2028 and continuing through 2030;
- (3) Establishes July 1, 2027, as the date by which a certified American Sign Language interpreter shall be

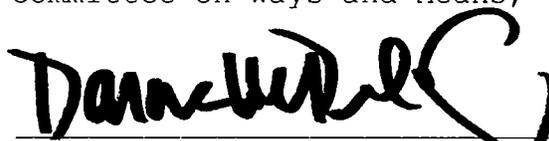


provided at each live broadcast press conference pursuant to a state of emergency; and

- (4) Changing the effective date to July 1, 2050, to facilitate further discussion on the measure.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Ways and Means that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2109, S.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Third Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2109, S.D. 2.

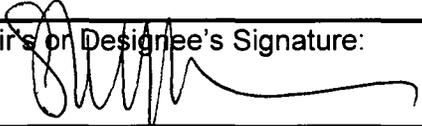
Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Ways and Means,


DONOVAN M. DELA CRUZ, Chair



The Senate
Thirty-Third Legislature
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes
Committee on Ways and Means
WAM

Bill / Resolution No.:* <i>SB2109, SD1</i>	Committee Referral: <i>PSM, WAM</i>	Date: <i>3/3/2026</i>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is: <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
DELA CRUZ, Donovan M. (C)	X			
MORIWAKI, Sharon Y. (VC)	X			
DECOITE, Lynn	X			
ELEFANTE, Brandon J.C.	X			
HASHIMOTO, Troy N.	X			
INOUYE, Lorraine R.	X			
KANUHA, Dru Mamo	X			
KIDANI, Michelle N.	X			
KIM, Donna Mercado	X			
LEE, Chris	X			
RICHARDS, III, Herbert M. "Tim"	X			
WAKAI, Glenn	X			
FEVELLA, Kurt				X
TOTAL	<i>12</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>
Recommendation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature: 				
Distribution: Original Yellow Pink File with Committee Report Committee Drafting Agency				

*Only one measure per Record of Votes