

Honolulu, Hawaii
MAR 30, 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2151
S.D. 2
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 S.B. No. 2151, S.D. 2, entitled:

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

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to:

- (1) Clarify state and local authority during a state or local state of emergency;
- (2) Define "severe weather warning"; and
- (3) Allow the Legislature to terminate a state of emergency and county councils to terminate a local state of emergency.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from one member of the Kaua'i County Council; Grassroot Institute of Hawaii; League of Women Voters of Hawaii; Earthjustice; and nine individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency; Hawai'i Christian Coalition; and numerous individuals. Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Office of



Information Practices; Public First Law Center; and one individual.

Your Committee finds that this measure would ensure that government transparency and accountability as well as the constitutional framework of separation of powers and checks and balances are maintained even during a state of emergency. Although the Governor and county mayors need some latitude to handle an emergency as needed, they should not have carte blanche to suspend laws indefinitely or arbitrarily. Your Committee further finds that government actions during an emergency should be narrowly tailored and should demonstrate a clear connection between the actions taken and the protection of public health or safety.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Amending the preamble;
- (2) Modifying the scope of the prohibition against the Governor or a county mayor's suspension of access to certain records through any proclamation or declaration of emergency or a related rule or order;
- (3) Adding a definition of "catastrophic harm" to section 127A-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- (4) Amending the definitions of "disaster" and "emergency" under section 127A-2, Hawaii Revised Statutes;
- (5) Lowering the respective thresholds for an affirmative vote regarding the Legislature's or a county council's termination of the Governor's or a county mayor's declaration of a state of emergency or local state of emergency from a two-thirds' majority to a simple majority;
- (6) Changing its effective date to July 1, 3000, to encourage further discussion; and
- (7) 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 S.B. No. 2151, S.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2151, S.D. 2, 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



