



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P. O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM532
Max Matias, Jr. for Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee**

SENATOR JOY A. SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Wednesday, April 08, 2026 at 01:00 PM | Room Number: 225

1 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (“Department”) supports this confirmation
2 offering testimony.

3 **Department Testimony:** The Emergency Medical Services & Injury Prevention Systems Branch
4 (EMSIPSB), on behalf of the Department, respectfully submits this testimony in **strong support**
5 of the confirmation of Max R. Matias, Jr. (Chief Matias) as a member of the Emergency Medical
6 Services Advisory Committee (EMSAC).

7 Chief Matias brings more than twenty-five years of distinguished leadership in fire, emergency
8 medical services, and aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) operations in the State of Hawaii.
9 He currently serves as Fire Chief and Lihue (LIH) ARFF Commander for the Hawaii State
10 Department of Transportation, where he provides executive leadership, administrative
11 direction, and operational oversight for airport rescue and firefighting operations and the ARFF
12 Regional Training Center. Prior to this role, he served eight years as Fire Chief and Kona (KOA)
13 ARFF Commander, overseeing statewide ARFF personnel development, interagency
14 coordination, and regional emergency response readiness.

15 Throughout his career, Chief Matias has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to training,
16 professional standards, and system improvement. He serves as the State of Hawaii (SOH)

1 Department of Transportation Airport Division (DOTA) National Registry of Emergency Medical
2 Technicians (NREMT) Training Center Program Director and ARFF Emergency Medical Services
3 (EMS) Program Manager, ensuring compliance with national standards and strengthening EMS
4 workforce development across the state. His training leadership extends beyond Hawaii to
5 mutual aid partners and Western Pacific Island nations, reinforcing Hawaii's role as a regional
6 leader in emergency preparedness and aviation safety.

7 Chief Matias' frontline experience is equally extensive. His career includes service with
8 American Medical Response Kauai, Barking Sands Fire & Emergency Services Department, and
9 more than seventeen years in airport ARFF operations at Lihu'e Airport. In addition, he serves
10 as a Lecturer in Fire Science at Hawaii Community College, contributing to the education and
11 mentorship of the next generation of firefighters and emergency medical technicians.

12 His professional credentials reflect the depth of his expertise. Chief Matias holds ProBoard
13 certifications as Fire Officer I-IV, Fire Instructor I-III and Proctor, and Health and Safety Officer,
14 and he has completed National Fire Academy Leadership I, II, and III programs. These
15 qualifications underscore his strong foundation in governance, risk management, operational
16 command, and organizational leadership.

17 Chief Matias' combination of executive leadership, operational command experience, EMS
18 program administration, and commitment to training and professional standards make him
19 exceptionally well qualified to serve on the Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee.
20 His practical experience across airport, municipal, and private EMS systems provides valuable
21 perspective to support statewide EMS policy development, interagency coordination, and
22 system strengthening.

23 We strongly urge your support for the confirmation of Max R. Matias, Jr. to EMSAC. His
24 leadership, expertise, and dedication to public safety will be a tremendous asset to the State of
25 Hawaii.

- 1 Thank you for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

Hearing Scheduled for
Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 1:00 pm
Before the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
Hawaii State Capitol

TO: Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members of the
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

FROM: Marilyn A. Matsunaga, Chair
Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee

SUBJECT: **GM 532 Max Matias, Jr.** to the
Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee

It is an honor to offer this testimony in **STRONGEST SUPPORT** of the appointment of Max Matias, Jr. to the Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee (EMSAC).

Max is an outstanding leader in fire and emergency services with more than 25 years of experience in serving the people of Kauai in leadership, administration, operational oversight, workforce development, and education in these specialty fields.

As Fire Chief at Lihue Airport, he is involved with county, state, federal, and Pacific Island nations activities focused on fire and emergency service management and provision. His skill in navigating multi-level and collaborative initiatives is well regarded. He also shares his expertise with emergency medical technician students as a lecturer with the UH Community College at Palama Nui. Earlier in his career, he was an EMT/firefighter at Barking Sands and also served in the private sector on Kauai with AMR.

Max is amazing and he brings real world experience from the frontlines as well as the leadership position in emergency services. I most strongly support his appointment to EMSAC.

Thank you for your consideration.