

## **WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF ROBERT H-H HARTER**

### **Nominee for the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management**

#### **Submitted to Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair, Senate Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs**

#### **1. Why do you wish to be a member of the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management?**

I seek to serve as an O'ahu representative on the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management (HACEM) out of a deep commitment to the emergency and disaster preparedness, resilience, safety and well-being of our communities. My professional life has been dedicated to the mission of preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all hazards that threaten lives, property, and the continuity of our communities.

I hope to support the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) and its county partners by contributing to statewide resilience efforts and by offering informed, practical guidance grounded in years of operational experience. I am eager to share my knowledge, skills, and insights as a seasoned emergency management practitioner to strengthen strategic oversight, policy development, and interagency coordination.

My desire to serve is best captured in the words of John Wesley: *"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."* This principle has guided my life and careers and continues to shape my commitment to public service.

#### **2. How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a member of the Hawaii Advisory Council on Emergency Management?**

I understand the role of a HACEM member to be that of a representative of the community—one who advises the Governor, Legislature, the Director and Administrator of Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) on matters related to disaster preparedness, planning, and operations. The Council plays a vital role in promoting public engagement, strengthening community understanding of emergency management, and ensuring that statewide policies reflect the needs and realities of Hawai'i's diverse communities.

**3. Given your understanding of the role and responsibilities of a member of the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management, why do you believe that you are qualified for the position? Please include a brief statement of your skills, expertise, or knowledge that would aid in your decision-making ability as a member of the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management.**

I believe I am well qualified to serve on HACEM based on my extensive background in emergency management, military service, and community engagement.

**Emergency Management Experience**

For nearly fourteen years (2011–2025), I served as an Emergency Management Staff Officer with the City and County of Honolulu, Department of Emergency Management (DEM). In this role, I worked collaboratively with a wide range of partners to develop emergency plans, conduct disaster response operations, and promote community preparedness. My work included close coordination with:

- City departments (Fire, Police, Emergency Medical Services, Environmental Services, Transportation, Facility Maintenance, and others)
- State agencies (Departments of Education, Health, Land and Natural Resources, Hawai'i National Guard, and HI-EMA)
- Non-governmental organizations (American Red Cross, The Salvation Army, Civil Air Patrol, Hawaiian Humane Society, etc.)
- Private-sector partners (tourism industry, utilities, telecommunications, transportation, etc.)
- Federal partners (National Weather Service, U.S. Coast Guard, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Defense installations – Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Marine Corps Base Hawaii, U.S. Garrison Hawaii)

These relationships, built through planning, training, exercising, and real-world response, have equipped me with the collaborative mindset and operational understanding essential for effective service on Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management.

**Military Service**

My nearly 30-year career as a U.S. Army commissioned officer (1981–2011) further strengthens my qualifications. As an infantry and civil affairs/civil-military operations officer, I gained extensive experience in planning, organizing, and executing humanitarian

assistance missions overseas and Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) domestically. These experiences align closely with the mission and guiding principles of HI-EMA and HACEM.

### **Community Volunteer Service**

For more than 35 years, I have served as an active volunteer with the American Red Cross. This work has kept me grounded in the needs of individuals and families affected by disaster and has reinforced my commitment to compassionate, community-centered service.

### **4. What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service?**

During my term of service, I hope to:

- Support the HACEM Chair in strengthening statewide preparedness, response capabilities, and public outreach.
- Provide HI-EMA with community-based insights and feedback to enhance preparedness and resilience initiatives.
- Assist in advancing HI-EMA's mission to help Hawai'i's 'ohana prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from disasters.

### **5. Name three qualities that best describe you that would make you stand out. How would these qualities benefit the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management?**

#### **Collaborator**

Emergency management requires unity of effort. I am committed to working closely with fellow Council members, HI-EMA, and partners statewide to advance the shared vision of a ready and resilient Hawai'i.

#### **Respectful**

My service—as an American Red Cross Disaster Services volunteer and as a DEM staff officer—has brought me face-to-face with individuals experiencing some of the most difficult moments of their lives. I approach all people and organizations with impartiality, neutrality, and compassion, recognizing the unique strengths each brings to disaster response.

## **Communicator**

The Council's mandate includes advising state leadership and promoting community engagement. I am committed to listening to community concerns, communicating preparedness messages effectively, and ensuring that the voices of Hawai'i's residents inform statewide emergency management decisions.

### **6. Name one previous experience that would make you stand out. How would this benefit the Hawaii Advisory Council on Emergency Management?**

One experience that stands out is my service as coordinator of the Honolulu Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC). The LEPC brings together government, industry, academia, and community partners to enhance hazardous materials (HAZMAT) safety and emergency response.

Under the leadership of the LEPC Chair, a Honolulu Fire Department Battalion Chief, I helped transform the LEPC into a robust, collaborative organization—even during the COVID-19 period. We expanded participation, strengthened information sharing, and secured funding to improve HAZMAT training and equipment for first responders.

This experience demonstrates my ability to convene diverse stakeholders, build consensus, and sustain collaborative efforts—skills directly applicable to service on the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management.

### **7. Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interest that could arise during your service on the Hawaii Advisory Council on Emergency Management? How would you overcome any possible conflict of interest?**

I do not foresee any conflicts of interest arising during my service on the Hawaii Advisory Council on Emergency Management. Should any potential conflict emerge, I would immediately disclose it to the HACEM Chair and seek guidance. Transparency is essential to fulfilling the responsibilities of this role.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Robert H-H Harter**

**DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OKELE ULIA PŌPILIKIA  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

650 SOUTH KING STREET, BASEMENT • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 723-8960 • FAX: (808) 524-3439 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



RANDAL COLLINS  
DIRECTOR  
PO'O

JENNIFER WALTER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O

**LATE**

March 11, 2026

The Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Chair  
The Honorable Chris Lee, Vice-Chair  
and Members of the Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
The Senate  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street, Room 016  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Fukunaga, Vice-Chair Lee, and members of the Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs:

**SUBJECT:** Honolulu Department of Emergency Management Support for GM625:  
Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i  
Advisory Council on Emergency Management, Gubernatorial Nominee,  
Robert Harter, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

I am Dr. Randal Collins, director of the Department of Emergency Management (DEM), City and County of Honolulu. DEM strongly supports GM625 and the appointment of Robert Harter to the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management.

Mr. Harter has a long history of exemplary service in emergency management. He will bring a wealth of knowledge from his career in both the United States Army and the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Emergency Management. In addition to this service, Mr. Harter is also a long-time volunteer with the American Red Cross and on the Board of Directors of the Emergency Management Professionals of Hawai'i. This combination of experience gives Mr. Harter a broad and extremely valuable perspective he can bring to the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management.

Given the information above, DEM strongly supports Mr. Harter's appointment. Thank you for your consideration. I am available should you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randal Collins".

Dr. Randal A. Collins, CEM  
Director

**GM-625**

Submitted on: 3/9/2026 2:28:00 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elizabeth Galvez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Elizabeth Galvez  
lizg001@gmail.com  
09 March 2026

Subject: Robert H-H Harter, seeking to serve as an active council member of the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management (HACEM).

I am writing in FULL SUPPORT of Robert Harter to serve as a council member of the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management (HACEM). I have known Bob professionally for almost 15 years; he has served as the Emergency Management Staff Officer at the City and County of Honolulu, Department of Emergency Management. His experiences, professionalism, and depth of knowledge will be a great asset to HACEM.

I have worked with Bob on numerous occasions, in my capacity as a Hawai'i State employee that

deals with releases or potential releases of hazardous substances which include oil and chemicals. Bob has served as the County's Hazardous Materials and Logistics Officer, and I do recall that whenever there was an incident, he was one that was quick to ask if any assistance was needed.

On a personal level, I have known Bob for over 10 years; he always had an infectious smile and kind words of encouragement when the "going gets tough", specially during environmental emergencies such as the Red Hill Drinking Water Incident.

For the challenges that the State may face in the realm of emergencies, whether natural or man-made, Bob has the hindsight to have both the insight and the foresight to serve on the Advisory Council on Emergency Management.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Elizabeth Galvez

**GM-625**

Submitted on: 3/10/2026 12:13:33 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michael Kern	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Michael Kern and I wholeheartedly support Robert Harter’s nomination to represent ‘Oahu on the Hawai’i Advisory Council on Emergency Management. I have known “Bob” through the Emergency Management Professionals of Hawaii where we were both founding members and served on the board together for many years. As the 2025 president for the organization, I always knew I could count on Bob as one of the most reliable and conscientious members of the board. For years, he took on the leadership role for coordinating the guest speakers educating our members on a host of current topics in emergency management. Our members come from across the state and represent a broad spectrum of roles in emergency management including local, state, and federal government, nonprofits, and private companies across a range of sectors including health care, education, utilities, military, transportation, communication, and first responders. Learning from such a diverse network of unique perspectives on emergency management provides a broad foundation that would serve Bob well as a member of the advisory council.

For the last 15 years, I served in FEMA’s Pacific Area Office here in Hawaii. In that capacity, I also had opportunities to work with Bob in his logistical role at Honolulu Department of Emergency Management. I know he also served as an on-call duty officer immediately responding to emerging issues. He has experienced firsthand, the many successes and challenges in responding to incidents on O’ahu. In addition to his full-time work as an emergency manager, Bob has been a dedicated Red Cross volunteer, providing yet another perspective on disaster response.

Robert Harter knows well the issues and challenges facing emergency management. He has more than a decade of experience with preparedness, response, and recovery efforts across our island. He has proven himself as a committed volunteer, experienced emergency manager, and trustworthy colleague. I hope that you will confirm his nomination to the Hawai’i Advisory Council on Emergency Management.

**LATE**

**GM-625**

Submitted on: 3/11/2026 7:37:41 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Crystal van Beelen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to offer my strong support for the nomination of Robert Harter to serve on the Hawai'i Advisory Council on Emergency Management.

I had the privilege of working with Bob during our time with the City and County of Honolulu Department of Emergency Management. During that time, he consistently demonstrated professionalism, dedication, and a deep commitment to public safety.

Bob was instrumental in supporting the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC), the hazardous materials (HazMat) program, and broader emergency preparedness initiatives. His contributions helped strengthen coordination between agencies and improved readiness for incidents affecting our community.

Bob's military background served him exceptionally well in emergency management. He was organized, decisive, and always among the first ready to respond when situations required action. His ability to remain calm under pressure and focus on mission priorities made him a reliable and respected member of the team.

In addition, Bob's years of volunteering with the American Red Cross greatly benefited our sheltering and mass care efforts at the Department of Emergency Management. His experience in that arena brought valuable insight into caring for displaced residents and coordinating humanitarian support during emergencies.

Bob has the experience, leadership, and commitment necessary to serve effectively in this role. I am confident that he will make a positive difference if selected.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of Robert Harter's nomination