

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STEPHEN F. LOGAN
MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
KAHU HO'OMALU PŌULIA

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
4204 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4420

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2581 HD1,
RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

February 18, 2026

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice-Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) respectfully submits testimony in **OPPOSITION** to House Bill 2581, HD1 as currently drafted. While we appreciate the Legislature's intent to preserve constitutional separation of powers, we have serious concerns regarding the bill's amendments and their potential impact on effective emergency management in Hawai'i.

The amendments restrict "disaster" and "emergency" to sudden occurrences causing catastrophic harm. This narrow scope excludes many emerging or prolonged crises that do not manifest suddenly but still require urgent coordinated response such as public health outbreaks or droughts that evolve over time. HIEMA's ability to proactively respond could be severely hindered.

Although the bill aims to prevent executive overreach into long-term policy issues, some emergencies inherently extend beyond sudden events. Climate-related hazards, infrastructure failures, or evolving disease outbreaks require sustained emergency powers and coordination. Limiting authority to only immediate catastrophes risks delayed or inadequate responses.

The bill does not address how HIEMA and other agencies will coordinate with the legislature and executive under the new constraints. This lack of procedural clarity could lead to confusion and inefficiencies during emergencies, undermining response efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in OPPOSITION of House Bill 2581, HD1.

James Barros: james.barros@hawaii.gov; 808-733-4300

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:23:50 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roslyn Cummings	E Ola Kakou Hawai'i / Malama:Cummings God Trust	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Submitted by:

E Ola Kākou Hawai'i

Malama Cummings 'Ohana God Trust

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in support of HB 2581 HD / SB 2151 SD1 to ensure that emergency powers do not override vested rights protected under statutory, constitutional, treaty, common and trust law.

Emergency proclamations are extraordinary measures. They must not be exercised in a manner that suspends or impairs the protected rights of Na Kanaka the people, Kanaka Maoli, hoa'āina Native Tenant, and ho'oilina Heirs, without clear legislative oversight and lawful evidences.

Under HRS §1-1, the common law of England is adopted in Hawai'i only insofar as it is not inconsistent with the Constitution, laws, and Hawaiian usage. Hawaiian usage includes customary and traditional rights that predate state governance and remain protected.

Under HRS §7-1, rights of tenants (hoa'āina) to access, cultivation, water, gathering, and subsistence practices are explicitly preserved. These are not discretionary privileges; they are statutorily protected rights.

Under HRS §172-11 and §172-12, the disposition and administration of Great Mahele lands known as Crown Lands, Government Lands, and Konohiki Lands, LCA land commission awards, RP Royal Patent are subject to procedural safeguards. Executive suspension of laws through prolonged emergency authority risks bypassing those safeguards.

For proper understanding of the scope and limits of governmental power in Hawai‘i, it is essential to recall the original constitutional and land framework of the Hawaiian Kingdom prior to 1864.

The Great Māhele (1848) formally distinguished:

- Crown Lands – held for the dignity and office of the Mō‘ī, not as private disposable property;
- Government Lands – held by the Hawaiian Kingdom for governance and the benefit of the people;
- Konohiki Lands – held by chiefs subject to duties and obligations within the ahupua‘a system;
- Kuleana Lands – awarded to maka‘āinana through Land Commission Awards (LCAs) and confirmed by Royal Patent.

Land Commission Awards and Royal Patents were not casual grants. They were adjudicated recognitions of vested property rights issued under lawful authority of the Kingdom. Once issued, those patents carried metes and bounds and were protected under common law principles of title.

Land Commission Awards (LCAs) and Royal Patents were adjudicated recognitions of vested property rights issued under lawful authority of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Once boundaries were settled and commutation satisfied, a patent issued defining metes and bounds.

Under HRS §172-11, land patents issued upon an LCA inure to the benefit of the heirs and assigns of the original awardee, confirming hereditary continuity of title.

Under HRS §172-12, issuance of a patent upon boundary certification extinguishes the government's commutation interest and formally defines the land conveyed. Case law confirms that such awards, once long adjudicated, are not lightly disturbed and cannot be collaterally attacked.

These provisions codify continuity of vested rights

The pre-1864 Hawaiian Kingdom operated under constitutional law, rule of law, and fiduciary governance. Authority was not arbitrary. The government was bound by law, by duty, and by obligations to protect land, water, and the rights of *hoa'āina* and *po'e ho'oilina*.

These foundational principles remain relevant today through:

- HRS §1-1, preserving Hawaiian usage where not inconsistent with law;
- HRS §7-1, protecting tenant and subsistence rights;
- Statutory and federal recognition that vested rights were not extinguished by statehood.

Emergency authority must be exercised with full awareness that land in Hawai'i is not merely administrative property, but land layered with adjudicated rights, royal patents, and statutory protections that predate modern governance structures.

Extraordinary powers cannot override vested rights rooted in this historical and legal foundation.

Section 19 of the Admission Act (1959) preserves existing rights and does not extinguish vested claims or native usages. Federal law did not authorize erasure of pre-existing rights.

Further, Public Law 103-150 formally acknowledges that Original Hawaiian people never directly relinquished claims to inherent sovereignty or national lands. While not operative to alter title, it is evidentiary acknowledgment by Congress of unresolved historical claims.

The Rule of Law requires:

1. Lawful authority exercised within defined limits;
2. Evidence-based justification for suspension of statutes;
3. Legislative oversight when extraordinary powers extend beyond immediate emergency response.

Equity jurisdiction recognizes that extraordinary executive powers must be narrowly tailored and cannot be used to impair vested rights without due process.

For Na Kanaka 1839, Kanaka Maoli 1859, ho‘āina 1850, and ho‘oilina 1848, prolonged emergency proclamations can result in:

- Restriction of access to lands and waters,
- Suspension of statutory protections,
- Impairment of customary practices.

Early Hawaiian Kingdom Supreme Court decisions confirm this principle:

- 1 H. 90 (1851) – An award of the Land Commission cannot be collaterally attacked once adjudicated.
- 5 H. 354 (1885) – Courts are inclined not to disturb land commission awards long adjudicated.
- 6 H. 315 (1882) – A patent is evidence that the government’s commutation interest is extinguished.

- 2 H. 202 (1859) – Certificates of award and accompanying surveys are admissible evidence of title.
- 15 H. 648 – Awards may issue in the name of a deceased person; heirs determine their respective rights.

These authorities establish that:

1. Adjudicated awards created vested property rights.
2. Government interest is extinguished upon proper patent issuance.
3. Heirs and assigns inherit enforceable rights.
4. Courts protect long-settled titles from disturbance.

Modern codification preserves this continuity:

- HRS §172-11 confirms that patents issued upon Land Commission Awards inure to the benefit of heirs and assigns.
- HRS §172-12 confirms issuance of patents upon boundary settlement and extinguishment of government interest.
- HRS §1-1 preserves Hawaiian usage where not inconsistent with law.
- HRS §7-1 protects rights of tenants and *hoa‘āina*.

The Rule of Law requires that emergency powers not impair vested, adjudicated property rights or statutory protections rooted in this foundational system.

Equity jurisdiction recognizes that extraordinary authority must not be exercised in a manner that disturbs settled title, extinguished interests, or hereditary rights without due process and clear legislative authorization.

Accordingly, any extension of emergency authority must be narrowly construed so as not to impair rights confirmed through Land Commission Awards, Royal Patents, and statutory protections of *hoā‘āina* and *ho‘oilina*.

These are not abstract concerns; they implicate protected rights grounded in statute and federal law.

HB 2581 HD and SB 2151 SD1 restore constitutional balance by ensuring that emergency authority remains temporary, accountable, and subject to legislative review.

The House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs today exercises legislative authority over lands and property whose origins trace to the constitutional governance of the Hawaiian Kingdom. While governance structures have changed over time, the foundational principles of lawful administration, fiduciary duty, and protection of vested rights have not.

Crown Lands, Government Lands, Konohiki lands, Land Commission Awards, and Royal Patents were not abstractions. They defined property, revenue, boundaries, and obligations. They established that governance over land was never absolute — it was conditioned by law, adjudication, and duty.

This Committee now stands in that lineage of responsibility.

The Rule of Law requires that extraordinary executive powers not impair vested property rights, extinguished government interests, or hereditary protections confirmed through adjudication and statute. Where land is property, and where revenue flows from its use, the obligation to act within lawful bounds is heightened.

Emergency authority must never become a mechanism to override settled title, statutory protection, or constitutional duty.

Your role is not merely administrative. It is fiduciary.

We respectfully urge passage of these measures to safeguard the Rule of Law and protect the rights of our po‘e and future generations.

“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

— John 8:32

Truth in governance requires lawful authority exercised within defined limits

Pule

E Ke Akua Mana Loa,

E alaka‘i mai i nā luna kānāwai a me nā alaka‘i i kēia lā.

E hā‘awi mai i ka na‘auao, ka pono, a me ka wiwo ‘ole

E mālama i ka ‘āina, i nā kuleana,

A e kūpa‘a ma ka ‘oia‘i‘o.

Amene.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

- Roslyn Manawaiakea Cummings

Feb 18, 2026, 2 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 325 and Videoconference

To: House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs
Rep. David A. Tarnas, Chair
Rep. Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii
Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2581 HD1 — RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Aloha chair, vice chair and other committee members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [HB2581 HD1](#), which would clarify the definitions of “emergency” and “disaster” in Hawaii’s emergency management statute.

Specifying what constitutes an “emergency” or “disaster” under chapter 127A would go a long way toward addressing the unchecked expansion of executive power via emergency proclamations.

As Grassroot discussed in its January 2021 policy brief “[Lockdowns Versus Liberty: How Hawaii’s Experience in 2020-2021 Demonstrates the Need to Revise the State’s Emergency Powers](#),” the governor of Hawaii has extremely broad powers to define what constitutes an emergency.¹

This has resulted in an ever-growing list of “emergencies” outside of the “immediate” and “catastrophic” threats described in this bill. Thus, important social issues such as homelessness or the lack of affordable housing seem to have been declared “emergencies” to take advantage of the broad powers granted to the executive branch under the emergency management statute. Moreover, the lack of clarity in the statute has resulted in a Hawaii Supreme Court opinion that largely upheld the use of executive power for this expansive definition of emergencies.²

¹ Malia Hill, “[Lockdowns Versus Liberty: How Hawaii’s Experience in 2020-2021 Demonstrates the Need to Revise the State’s Emergency Powers](#),” Grassroot Institute of Hawaii, January 2021.

² [Nakoa v. Governor of the State of Hawaii](#), 575 P.3d 506 (2025).

This use of emergency power might be an effective way to streamline decision-making and cut through cumbersome regulations. However, it also upsets the state’s constitutional balance of powers, allows the governor to act as a “super legislator” by waiving or suspending statewide laws, deprives the Legislature of its constitutional prerogative in the crafting of state policy and frustrates efforts to enact permanent reforms.

Governing via executive order also denies the public a voice on important issues, forcing the people to rely on the courts for redress — which is a slow and expensive process that acts as an additional barrier to public input.

Even those who agree with the goals or actions of some of these questionable emergency orders have expressed concern about the justification behind them.

This problem is compounded by the lack of any meaningful time limit on emergency orders. The executive’s ability to extend emergencies via supplemental proclamations means that an abuse of executive power could be extended indefinitely.

Creating a clear definition of what constitutes an “emergency” or “disaster” under the law would limit the potential for executive overreach via emergency orders.

The list of emergency events in HB2581, combined with the bill’s emphasis on immediate danger and timely action, gives a clear indication of legislative intent and would bring the statute in line with the common understanding of an emergency.

The experiences of the past few years have highlighted the need to reform Hawaii’s emergency management statute. There is room to restore the constitutional balance of powers without handicapping the executive’s ability to respond quickly and effectively to emergency situations.

By providing guidance on what an emergency is, this bill would help reassert the Legislature’s role in the use of emergency powers.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:52:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nako?olani Warrington	Kupuna for the Moopuna	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT. Mahalo.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:00:29 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janice K T Shiira	Shimanchu	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAII

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

February 18, 2026

2:00 PM

Conference Room 325

In **SUPPORT** of **HB2581 HD1**: RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of our over 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i **SUPPORTS** HB2581 HD1, which will protect the public interest and our very system of constitutional democracy from the potential misuse of state and county executive branch leaders' emergency powers.

As we have seen in recent years, the lack of clear statutory guardrails for the Governor's sweeping emergency powers has resulted in emergency proclamations that have significantly undermined the public interest, the public trust in government, and the separation of powers that is a foundation of our democracy. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that attempted to use a century-long problem, rooted in nuanced economic policies and myriad social and historical factors, to broadly suspend and/or rewrite a suite of laws protecting our environmental and cultural integrity, food security, climate resilience, the public's right-to-know, fiscal transparency and accountability, and even collective bargaining rights - without any actual mechanisms to ensure that housing developed under the proclamation would be affordable, or reserved for current Hawai'i residents.

While this latter emergency proclamation was substantially scaled back in its subsequent iterations, significant concerns remain about the potential for any administration to **declare long-standing and admittedly serious social challenges - such as housing, criminal activity, or poverty - as "emergencies," and thereby exercise their power to repeal or rewrite legislation for an indefinite length of time.** Without the transparency and public accountability of the normal, democratic lawmaking process, this could easily lead to significant and long-lasting changes to public policy that unduly benefit politically connected special interests, at the expense of the public interest - and our very democracy itself.

This measure would help to mitigate the risk of executive overreach by simply ensuring that the use of executive emergency authorities of "disaster" and "emergency" are limited to actual, bona fide disasters and emergencies that require and that can actually be addressed by expedient responses.

Notably, the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HIEMA) speculation about "climate hazards," "evolving disease outbreaks," "prolonged droughts," or "infrastructure failures" holds no merit. This measure specifically includes a wide range of unpredictable "climate hazards" as well as "disease or contagion outbreaks" in the definition of "disaster," and emergency responses to "infrastructure failures" due to extreme weather events, mudslides, fires, or any other conceivable cause other than deferred



maintenance would likewise be covered within its provisions. There is also no arbitrary time limit to emergency responses that could address these situations, only a requirement that timely emergency action is in fact able to minimize the impacts of any declared emergency. **Otherwise, HIEMA provides no justification as to why the legislature should be relieved of its policymaking and budget-setting prerogatives to address “prolonged droughts” or the aforementioned situations, to the extent that longer term and nuanced solutions may be necessary.**

Accordingly, the Sierra Club respectfully urges the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify on this critical measure.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 1:06:29 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debra Bringman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2581 HD1 because it strengthens Hawai'i's emergency management laws by restoring clear limits on when emergency powers can be used. The bill makes an important clarification that "disasters" and "emergencies" must involve **sudden and catastrophic events**, rather than long-term policy issues, ensuring that suspending laws is reserved only for true emergencies such as hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, fires, and other imminent threats to life or property. By narrowing the definitions of "disaster" and "emergency" to events that require timely action to avert immediate danger, HB2581 HD1 helps maintain the proper balance between legislative authority and executive power. This clarification is essential for protecting the separation of powers and preventing overreach while still preserving the State's ability to respond quickly during genuine crises.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:43:41 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Kealii Pang, Ph.D. I am a resident of Kaimukī, the President of a nonprofit that stewards State land in Wai‘anae for the cultural education of our ‘ōpio, and a retired federal biologist. During my career, I headed the invasive species branch for my agency and was on the front lines of the 2013 Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (CRB) detection at Hickam.

I am writing to express my STRONG SUPPORT for HB2581 HD1.

Restoring the Constitutional Balance

As a scientist, I understand the necessity of emergency authority. When a hurricane hits or a new invasive pest is detected, the executive needs the agility to act. However, as the 2025 Supreme Court decision in *Nakoa III v. Governor* highlighted, the current interpretation of Chapter 127A is dangerously broad.

By allowing the Governor to declare an "emergency" for "long-term issues"—such as the decades-old housing shortage—we are essentially granting the executive the power to suspend our state’s foundational environmental and cultural laws indefinitely.

The Biological Definition of a "Crisis"

In my professional experience, there is a clear distinction between a sudden disaster and a chronic condition:

- Sudden Disasters: These are the events this bill correctly defines—hurricanes, volcanic activity, or the "sudden natural or artificial cause" that requires immediate triage.
- Long-Term Issues: Problems like housing affordability or persistent "illegal activity" are social and political challenges. They require the deliberative legislative process, not the unilateral suspension of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) law (HRS 343) or historic preservation protections (HRS 6E).

Protecting our Cultural and Environmental Heritage

For the ‘ōpio I work with in Wai‘anae, the laws that protect our iwi kupuna and our coastal habitats are sacred. When an emergency proclamation suspends these laws to address a "long-term issue," it removes the public’s seat at the table.

- In 2023, we saw a housing proclamation that initially stripped away environmental and transparency requirements.
- Without the "common sense" definitions in HB2581 HD1, we risk a future where the Public Trust Doctrine is treated as a temporary suggestion rather than a constitutional mandate.

Conclusion

This bill correctly re-establishes that the legislature is the place where "long-standing public-policy challenges" are solved. We must reserve emergency powers for true, sudden catastrophes—not as a tool for administrative convenience to bypass the checks and balances that protect our ‘āina.

I respectfully urge the Committee to PASS HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Kealii Pang, Ph.D. Kaimukī, O‘ahu

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:40:24 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Nanea Lo**, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1**.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the country, the survival of our democracy depends on a meaningful separation of powers, including robust legislative and judicial checks on executive authority. Emergency powers are intended to address truly urgent and unforeseen crises—not to serve as a substitute for the democratic lawmaking process. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always demonstrate the restraint required by this foundational principle and may instead be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that properly belong within the Legislature’s purview.

Recent events have exposed the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by executive leadership. Notably, an emergency housing proclamation initially suspended a wide range of environmental, cultural, public transparency, procurement, labor, and good-governance laws, ostensibly to accelerate housing development—yet without meaningful affordability or residency requirements. Although the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this action pushed the limits of the Governor’s emergency authority, the underlying risk remains. A future executive could invoke long-standing and complex challenges—such as housing affordability or “illegal activity”—to declare an emergency and thereby bypass legislative and judicial checks indefinitely, with serious consequences for our environment, cultural integrity, civil rights, and democratic governance.

HB2581 HD1 responds to this risk by establishing clear, common-sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency,” along with modest but essential guardrails to prevent the abuse of executive emergency powers—both now and in the years and decades to come. These reforms do not hinder legitimate emergency response; rather, they protect the constitutional balance that ensures emergency authority is exercised responsibly and lawfully.

Please do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the safeguards proposed in this measure. By the time such a crisis occurs, it may already be too late.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS HB2581 HD1**.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai'i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition Member

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:19:07 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bianca Isaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1. Last year, I had multiple clients hire me to litigate against the governor's wrong-headed emergency housing proclamations.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges, such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity,” to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Bianca Isaki, Kane`ohe.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:59:05 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anne Lorenzo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, am e Committee Members,

My name is Anne M. Lorenzo and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Anne M. Lorenzo

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:32:52 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donelle Sawyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Donelle Sawyer and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Donelle Sawyer

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:40:10 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
J. Kehau Lucas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Kēhau Lucas and I am submitting testimony **in strong support of HB2581 HD1.**

HB2581 HD1 addresses clear, documented vulnerabilities in Hawai‘i’s emergency powers statutes by clarifying definitions and establishing guardrails that align with constitutional requirements and judicial precedent.

1. Hawai‘i’s Constitution requires meaningful separation of powers.

Articles III, V, and VI of the Hawai‘i State Constitution establish distinct legislative, executive, and judicial powers. The Hawai‘i Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that:

- emergency powers must be interpreted **narrowly**,
- executive authority cannot be used to **supersede or replace** the Legislature’s policymaking role, and
- checks and balances remain essential even during emergencies.

These principles are foundational and non-discretionary.

2. Recent events demonstrated that Hawai‘i’s emergency powers statutes are vulnerable to overbroad interpretation.

In 2023, an emergency proclamation on housing suspended a wide range of laws, including:

- environmental review requirements (HRS Chapter 343),
- cultural resource protections,
- Sunshine Law and public transparency provisions,
- procurement statutes, and
- labor standards.

The proclamation was issued to address long-standing housing challenges—issues that do not meet the traditional legal definition of an “emergency” or “disaster,” which typically requires sudden, unforeseen events posing immediate threats to life, health, or property.

The Hawai‘i Supreme Court later acknowledged that the proclamation approached the limits of executive authority, underscoring the need for statutory clarity.

3. Long-standing societal problems do not meet established legal definitions of “emergency.”

Across federal and state jurisprudence, emergencies are defined as **acute, time-sensitive events** requiring immediate action—such as natural disasters, public health crises, or imminent threats.

Challenges such as housing affordability, homelessness, or generalized “illegal activity” are serious but **do not constitute emergencies** under widely accepted legal standards. Allowing such issues to trigger emergency powers risks enabling:

- indefinite suspension of laws,
- circumvention of legislative authority, and
- erosion of public transparency and accountability.

HB2581 HD1 prevents this outcome by aligning statutory definitions with constitutional principles.

4. HB2581 HD1 provides modest, legally sound guardrails.

The bill:

- clarifies the definitions of “disaster” and “emergency,”
- ensures emergency powers cannot be used to bypass the Legislature for long-term policy changes, and
- preserves the executive’s ability to respond swiftly to genuine emergencies.

These provisions are consistent with best practices recommended by emergency management experts and constitutional scholars nationwide.

5. Legislative action is necessary to prevent future misuse.

Without statutory clarity, future executives could invoke emergency powers to address long-standing policy issues, thereby suspending laws that protect:

- environmental resources,
- cultural heritage,
- public transparency,

- labor rights, and
- democratic participation.

HB2581 HD1 ensures that emergency powers remain a tool for **true emergencies**, not a mechanism for unilateral policymaking.

Conclusion

HB2581 HD1 strengthens Hawai‘i’s democratic institutions by ensuring that emergency powers remain consistent with constitutional requirements and cannot be used to circumvent legislative authority. It provides clarity, accountability, and protection for the public interest—now and for future generations.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **PASS HB2581 HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.
Aloha ‘āina,

J. Kēhau Lucas

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:46:57 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Madonna Dizon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Kaleookamahina aka Madonna Dizon. I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers that includes legislative and judicial checks and balances against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always maintain the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority and may be tempted to use emergency statutory powers to create, amend, or suspend policies that should instead be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws to purportedly support housing construction, without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this action pushed the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to use long-standing and complex societal challenges—such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity”—to declare an emergency and indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure provides common-sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency,” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure—by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui loa for your support.

Respectfully submitted,
Kaleookamahina aka Madonna Dizon

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:54:59 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Reese Liggett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is William Reese Liggett and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
William Reese Liggett

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:10:51 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deborah Umiamaka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To the Honorable Members of the Hawai‘i State Legislature:

Re: Strong Support for HB2581 HD1 – Relating to Emergency Management

I am a Hawai‘i Island resident writing in strong support of HB2581 HD1, Relating to Emergency Management. This bill takes an important step toward protecting the people of Hawai‘i from improper or overly broad use of emergency powers by clearly defining the types of events that qualify as “disasters” and “emergencies” under chapter 127A.

Clear, objective definitions are essential to good governance and civil liberties. When the law precisely describes what situations rise to the level of a disaster or emergency, it becomes much harder for any administration to stretch those terms to fit political, financial, or convenience-based purposes. Tightening these statutory definitions helps ensure that extraordinary emergency powers are available for truly extraordinary situations, not as a routine tool of policy-making.

By clarifying the threshold for an emergency, HB2581 HD1 also strengthens accountability. Residents, courts, and the Legislature itself will be better able to evaluate whether a given proclamation actually meets the standards that you, as lawmakers, have written into law. That clarity supports due process, transparency, and public trust, because everyone can see when the legal conditions for an emergency have — or have not — been met.

While further reforms may still be needed to place clear time limits and additional safeguards on the exercise of emergency powers, HB2581 HD1 is a meaningful and necessary step in the right direction. It restores balance by aligning the trigger for emergency authority with clear statutory criteria and by reducing the risk of vague or open-ended declarations that can affect fundamental rights and daily life across our islands.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass HB2581 HD1.

Sincerely,

Deborah Umiamaka

Hawai'i Island Resident

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 11:21:22 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melissa Barker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

I am writing to ask that you support HB2581 HD1. This bill would more clearly define what constitutes a “disaster” for which the Governor’s and mayors’ sweeping emergency powers can be used to address.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 12:05:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karen Luke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our government is designed for group decision making. HB2581 HD1 keeps checks and balances against executive overreach.

Please support our democracy.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:16:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jubilee Johanna	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Jubilee Westergaard and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jubilee Westergaard



REPRESENTATIVE DAVID A. TARNAS, CHAIR
REPRESENTATIVE MAHINA POEPOE, VICE CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 2581 HD1
RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Wednesday, February 18, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Room 325, State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members:

Earthjustice **supports** House Bill 2581 HD1, which seeks to place guardrails on the governor’s and mayors’ use of emergency powers under HRS Chapter 127A by amending the definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” under that statute. These amendments are necessary to reestablish the proper constitutional balance of powers between the legislature and the executive branch with respect to the enactment of laws to address important issues of public policy.

A recent decision of the Hawai‘i Supreme Court, *Nakoa v. Governor of State*, 156 Hawai‘i 416, 575 P.3d 506 (2025), threatens to upset this vital balance. There, the Court interpreted HRS Chapter 127A to grant the governor extraordinary emergency powers – including the power to suspend laws enacted by the legislature – to address any situation “rationally related to the health, safety, and welfare of the public.” *Id.* at 424, 575 P.3d at 514. This interpretation allows for the governor to issue emergency proclamations that address “not only discrete events,” but also “long-term issues” of public policy. *Id.* at 435, 575 P.3d at 525. This broad grant of authority to the executive branch undermines the balance of power enshrined in the Hawai‘i Constitution, which vests the “legislative power of the State” in the legislature. Haw. Const. art. III, § 1.

To preserve the constitutional balance of powers and to avoid executive overreach, it must remain the exclusive providence of the legislature to address longstanding public policy challenges. Thus, in the wake of the Supreme Court’s ruling, it is vital for the legislature to amend the statutory definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” within HRS Chapter 127A such that the emergency powers granted to the governor are restricted solely to situations that involve responding to the sudden “occurrence of disasters or emergencies of unprecedented size and destructiveness” as originally intended. HRS § 127A-1(a).

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Dru N. Hara, Esq.
Project Attorney
Earthjustice, Mid-Pacific Office

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 1:58:33 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Guy Kudo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1.

Please PASS HB2581 HD1.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:20:41 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patti Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1.

Please PASS HB2581.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:38:53 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brittany Penaroza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members, my name is Brittany Penaroza, and I strongly support HB2581 HD1. In real disasters, swift executive action can save lives—but emergency powers must be clearly limited so they can’t be used to bypass democratic checks and balances or permanently suspend laws meant to protect people, ‘āina, and due process.

HB2581 HD1 would more clearly define what constitutes a “disaster” or “emergency” for purposes of using sweeping emergency powers, helping ensure those extraordinary authorities are reserved for sudden, high-harm events—not long-standing policy issues. Clear definitions are common-sense guardrails that protect the public interest and strengthen trust in government.

Please PASS HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 2:42:17 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kristina ZaZueta	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Kristina ZaZueta and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges, such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity,” to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Kristina ZaZueta

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:27:24 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
malcolm mackey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Malcolm Mackey, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Malcolm Mackey

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:33:42 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cardenas Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cardenas Pintor

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:34:55 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Keri Zacher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Keri Zacher and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Keri Zacher

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:38:38 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This measure provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities. Please PASS this measure.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:45:15 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Arika Hultquist	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Arika Hultquist, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Arika Hultquist

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 3:55:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Bellatti, Vive Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

I'm Jennifer Mitchell from the big island of Hawaii and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1.

I URGE the Committee to PASS HB2581 HD1.

Mahalo,

Jennifer Mitchell

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 6:22:33 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deirdre Madrid	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Deirdre Madrid and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Deirdre Madrid

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:28:29 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan Bambara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges, such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity,” to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Thank you for hearing my plea.

Sincerely,

Susan Bambara
Kurtistown

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 7:57:18 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michelei Tancayo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Michelei Tancayo and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Michelei Tancayo

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:48:07 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Candace Vizcarra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Absolutely ~~100~~ % strongly support!

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 8:55:50 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
George Michael	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand with the views of Sierra Club Hawaii. Seeing how authority in this country has been abusing the term 'emergency', I believe that we need to legislate common sense.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:35:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelsey Mapa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill which seeks to more clearly define what constitutes a disaster for which the Governor's and Mayors' sweeping emergency powers can be used to address. As the climate crisis worsens, I believe that being prepared and organized will help us navigate the coming challenges and this is a step in the right direction. I support this bill. Mahalo!

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:51:45 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
KEALA FUNG	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Keala Fung and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

This measure accordingly provides common sense definitions of “disaster” and “emergency” along with modest guardrails to better protect against the misuse of executive emergency authorities, whether now or in the years and decades to come. Please, do not wait for a constitutional, civil, or environmental crisis before adopting the critical guidance proposed in this measure - by then, it may be too late.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Keala Fung

Honolulu Hawaii

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 10:50:53 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle Oba	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Kyle Oba and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Kyle Oba

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 3:24:34 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Taacia Kukui Akana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

‘O wau nō ‘o Kukui a he kupa ‘ai au no Waimānalo. I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Na‘u mau,

T. Kukui Akana

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 7:55:26 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann V Saffery	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2581.

Mahalo,

Ann V Saffery

Honolulu, HI

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 7:56:47 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaua Kama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is E. Kaualilinoe Kama and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

E. Kaulilinoe Kama

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 8:37:55 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ezekiel Alapaki Bernabe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Not sure what the Governer and Mayor are doing beneath the office desk but that is fweakyy.
Just stop abusing emergency powers you know what you're doing wrong.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 9:03:15 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jackie Keefe and I am **in strong support of HB2581**, which would more clearly define what constitutes a “disaster” for which the Governor’s and mayors’ sweeping emergency powers can be used to address.

I am an advocate for fire survivors with disabilities, and I have witnessed first-hand the harms that the Governor's EPs have done to our disability community. Our houseless individuals have a disproportionately high rate of disabilities, and the EPs that the Governor has been depending on to build kauhale allow his complete disregard for regulations, including the necessity to build to ADA compliance standards.

ADA standards are already often not met in the development of our built environment, and the use of EPs to build without following any standards has exacerbated this crisis. Often times advocates have to sue developers and/or other entities when new development is not ADA compliant, and the Governors liberal use of Emergency Proclamations has multiplied this problem.

Take for example the Ka La'i Ola State Housing project for Lahaina Fire Survivors: not a single one of these units can accommodate wheelchair use. Almost every unit requires stairs to enter. Ramps only started being build for a small percentage (much lower than needed) of the units when the community spoke up.

We should not have to work so hard to ensure that ADA compliance, environmental, cultural protection, good governance, procurement, and labor laws are followed. As such, I urge you to **PASS HB2581 HD1**.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 9:14:20 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lory Ono	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Lory Ono, and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

Recent circumstances have highlighted the vulnerability of Hawai‘i’s own emergency powers statutes to potential misuse by local executive leadership. This includes an emergency proclamation on housing that initially suspended numerous environmental, cultural, good governance, public transparency, procurement, and labor laws, to purportedly support housing construction without any affordability or meaningful residency requirements. While the Hawai‘i Supreme Court recognized that this did push the limits of the Governor’s emergency authorities, the potential still exists for a future executive to attempt to use long-standing and complex societal challenges – such as unaffordable housing or “illegal activity” -- to declare an emergency and thereby indefinitely bypass the checks and balances that protect vital public interests, including in our environment, cultural integrity, and democracy itself.

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Lory Ono

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:10:25 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bo Breda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Bo Breda and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Bo Breda

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:11:40 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Peter Wilson and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Peter Wilson

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:14:48 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sierra Mcveigh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support hb2581 in order to stop the abuse of emergency powers.

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:15:31 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beth McDermott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Beth McDermott and I am writing in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Beth McDermott

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:22:14 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emily Gillmar	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Emily Gillmar and I **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Emily Gillmar

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 10:47:30 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shay Chan Hodges	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1.

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Accordingly, I urge the Committee to **PASS** HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Shay Chan Hodges

HB-2581-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2026 12:19:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/18/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Diane Ware	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and Committee Members,

My name is Diane Ware and I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB2581 HD1.

As we have seen in Hawai‘i and across the continent, the survival of our democracy may hinge upon a meaningful separation of powers, one that includes keeping legislative and judicial “checks and balances” against executive overreach. Unfortunately, executive leaders may not always have the same level of respect for this foundational limitation on their authority, and may be tempted to use emergency statutory authorities to create, amend, or suspend policies that should be developed through the democratic legislative process.

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Therefore, I urge the Committee to PASS HB2581 HD1. Mahalo nui for the opportunity to testify.

Volcano HI 96785