

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KEITH A. REGAN
COMPTROLLER
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWE LAULĀ
P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

WRITTEN TESTIMONY
OF
KEITH A. REGAN, COMPTROLLER
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES
TO THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

FEBRUARY 17, 2026, 3:30 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 225 AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, STATE CAPITOL

S.B. 2882

RELATING TO STATE BUILDINGS

Chairs McKelvey and Fukunaga, Vice Chairs Gabbard and Lee, and Members of the Committees, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on S.B. 2882.

The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) offers **comments** on this measure, which requires certain state buildings intended for use as emergency shelters and constructed on or after July 1, 2027, be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes.

We note that public buildings currently under design will be constructed using funds appropriated in prior years. Those projects in design may not have been appropriated sufficient funds to satisfy the structural requirements for category five hurricane resistance and will require appropriation of additional design and construction

funds to satisfy the related design criteria. We would recommend that the measure be modified to state: (d) All state buildings with the intent of serving a secondary purpose as an emergency shelter shall be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and be used as shelters in the event of an emergency, provided that they: (1) Are fully enclosed; (2) Have the capacity to shelter a large population; (3) Are intended to serve as shelters during and after a Category 5 hurricane; and (4) Will be designed ~~constructed~~ on or after July 1, 2027.

In addition, there are some types of public buildings for which the cost of designing and constructing to category five hurricane resistance requirements may not be appropriate (such as small storage facilities, vehicle carports, and similar incidental facilities) as those buildings are not intended to be used as emergency shelters.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

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 PŪULIA

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 SENATE BILL 2882,
RELATING TO STATE BUILDINGS

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS &
PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

February 17, 2026

Aloha Chairs McKelvey and Fukunaga, Vice-Chairs Gabbard and Lee, and Members of both Committees:

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency is in **SUPPORT** of Senate Bill 2882, which mandates that certain state buildings constructed on or after July 1, 2027, be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and serve as emergency shelters. This measure addresses the increasing threat of stronger hurricanes to Hawai'i due to climate change and warmer ocean temperatures, which have reduced natural protections such as trade winds and increased hurricane intensity.

The bill's provisions will enhance community resilience by ensuring that public schools, colleges, universities, and other qualifying state buildings provide safe shelter during and after severe storms. Given the limited existing shelter capacity in the state, this legislation is a crucial step in protecting residents and minimizing damage during catastrophic weather events.

HIEMA supports this measure, and any effort that promotes resiliency - provided it does not negatively impact on the priorities of the Governor's executive budget. This ensures that fiscal responsibility and budget priorities are maintained while advancing critical hurricane preparedness.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 2882.

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



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/17/2026
Time: 03:30 PM
Location: CR 225 & Videoconference
Committee: GVO/PSM

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB2882, RELATING TO STATE BUILDINGS.

Purpose of Bill: Requires certain state buildings intended for use as emergency shelters and constructed on or after July 1, 2027, be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and concerns on SB 2882.

Hawaii's vulnerability to severe weather is clear, and the Department agrees that the State must continue improving preparedness and increasing the number of safe shelters available to the public. A coordinated program to develop new shelters may be most effectively led at the statewide level by the Office of the Governor, in partnership with the State of Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs - Insurance Division, the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, and other relevant agencies. However, the bill's current language requiring the development of new shelters capable of withstanding Category 5 hurricane forces would benefit from clearer definition and scope. The Hawaii State Building Code currently provides design criteria for Enhanced Hurricane Protection Areas in high-occupancy public buildings, and those standards are based on performance up to a Category 3 event. These facilities require enhanced structural integrity, projectile resistance, interior restroom access, and emergency generator power to remain operable during a storm.

Raising these standards to Category 5 levels for school facilities would involve significant cost and major structural redesigns that are not compatible with the daily instructional use of school buildings. The Hawaii State Building Code does not contain Category 5 design provisions for state or county owned high occupancy buildings in its hurricane sheltering appendix, underscoring the gap between current code standards and the level of performance envisioned in the bill.

While the Department understands the intent to enhance statewide readiness, the fiscal and practical impacts of applying Category 5 criteria to new school facilities requires careful evaluation. In light of the current substantial financial, structural, and operational implications, the Department respectfully requests that the Committee consider refining the scope and clarifying the specific buildings intended to meet these standards.

The Department offers the following suggestions for revisions:

- Define terms: Add definitions for “fully enclosed,” “capacity to shelter a large population,” and “intended to serve as shelters” to avoid inconsistent interpretation.
- Assign responsibility: Designate the lead agency (for example, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency in coordination with the State of Hawaii Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs - Insurance Division and the other agencies) for standards, guidance, and certification.
- Require a cost and feasibility study: Before applying Category 5 design to broad building classes, require a short, funded study to estimate costs, identify priority building types, and recommend practical performance targets.
- Phase and pilot: Start with a pilot for new high-occupancy public buildings (e.g., community centers) and adopt a phased timeline for broader application.
- Provide implementation tools: Require standardized templates for capacity calculations, shelter equipment checklists, and a twelve-month post-construction review to assess outcomes and administrative burden.

With the proposed clarified definitions, a designated lead agency, a required cost/feasibility study, and a phased pilot approach, Section 2(d)'s four requirements can be revised and implemented in a way that advances statewide shelter capacity while managing fiscal and operational impacts.

The Department thanks the committee for its careful consideration of the comments offered for SB 2882.

SB-2882

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 5:38:38 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/17/2026 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dr. Kioni Dudley	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I strongly support SB2882 and ask you to vote to pass it. It is such an important bill. SB2882 requires that all new state buildings, including public school, college, and university buildings shall be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and be used as shelters in the event of an emergency.

We don't have a single shelter on O'ahu that can withstand a Category 2, 3, 4 or 5 hurricane. Three out of the five hurricanes in the Atlantic in 2025 were Category 5 hurricanes! Cat 5s are what's coming, not Category 1. And predictions are that most of the future Category 5s will be in the northern Pacific, where Hawai'i is. have ***no place*** for ***anyone***, including you, to go. Thousands of wooden homes will be greatly damaged or destroyed. And thousands of people will die inside those homes because they had no safe place to go. We need all new state buildings to be able to serve as shelters!

SB-2882

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:05:56 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/17/2026 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SB2882 to improve the State's preparedness for stronger hurricanes by requiring certain state buildings, including public school, college, and university buildings, constructed on or after July 1, 2027, to be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and be used as shelters in the event of an emergency. **This measure will help save lives.** Please PASS SB2882.

To: Senator Angus L.K. McKelvey, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Committee on Government Operations

Senator Carol Fukunaga, Chair
Senator Chris Lee, Vice Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 16, 2026

RE: Senate Bill 2882
Measure Title: RELATING TO STATE BUILDINGS.
Report Title: Hurricane Preparedness; Category 5; State Buildings; Shelters

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support Senate Bill 2882. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

SB-2882

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:15:37 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/17/2026 3:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SB2882 and ask you to vote to pass it. It is such an important bill. SB2882 requires that all new state buildings, including public school, college, and university buildings shall be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and be used as shelters in the event of an emergency.

We don't have a single shelter on O'ahu that can withstand a Category 2, 3, 4 or 5 hurricane. Three out of the five hurricanes in the Atlantic in 2025 were Category 5 hurricanes! Cat 5s are what's coming, not Category 1. And predictions are that most of the future Category 5s will be in the northern Pacific, where Hawai'i is.

We have ***no place for anyone***, including you, to go. Thousands of wooden homes will be greatly damaged or destroyed. And thousands of people will die inside those homes because they had no safe place to go. need all new state buildings to be able to serve as shelters!

Mahalo, Michael Plowman

LATE

SB-2882

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:44:51 PM

Testimony for GVO on 2/17/2026 3:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Gauer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support and ask you to vote to pass it. It is such an important bill. It requires that all new state buildings, including public school, college, and university buildings shall be designed to withstand Category 5 hurricanes and be used as shelters in the event of an emergency. We don't have a single shelter on O'ahu that can withstand a Category 2, 3, 4 or 5 hurricane. Three out of the five hurricanes in the Atlantic in 2025 were Category 5 hurricanes! Cat 5s are what's coming, not Category 1. And predictions are that most of the future Category 5s will be in the northern Pacific, where Hawai'i is. We have ***no place for anyone***, including you, to go. Thousands of wooden homes will be greatly damaged or destroyed. And thousands of people will die inside those homes because they had no safe place to go. need all new state buildings to be able to serve as shelters! Or at least a few in each district.