



Lanikai Brewing Company
175 Hamakua Drive, Unit C
Kailua, Hawaii 96734
www.lanikaibrewing.com

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR21 / SR18
REQUESTING A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A RURAL HEALTH CLINIC IN
VOLCANO**

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

My name is **Steve Haumschild**, and I am a part-time resident of Volcano and a business owner of Lanikai Brewing Company Volcano. I am writing in strong support of SCR21 / SR18, which seeks to evaluate the establishment of a rural health clinic or similar access point for the Volcano community.

Volcano is a uniquely rural and geographically isolated community on Hawai'i Island. Despite its small population it serves a much larger and more complex population when considering both demographics and visitor traffic.

One of the most critical factors supporting this measure is the **age of our community**. Volcano has a **median age of approximately 68 years**, dramatically higher than the state average, with over **40% of residents aged 65 and older**. This is not a transient population—it is a community of kūpuna who require consistent, accessible primary care, chronic disease management, and timely emergency response.

At the same time, Volcano faces significant **geographic and healthcare access challenges**. The nearest major medical facilities are located in Hilo, approximately **28 miles away**, requiring a 40–45 minute drive under ideal conditions. For many residents—particularly elderly individuals, those with limited transportation, or during adverse weather or volcanic conditions—this distance represents a real barrier to care. Delayed treatment for otherwise manageable conditions often leads to preventable emergencies and increased strain on the broader healthcare system.

Beyond its resident population, Volcano sits at the gateway to **Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park**, one of the most visited destinations in the state. The area receives **millions of visitors annually**, dramatically increasing the number of individuals in need of potential medical services on any given day. These visitors engage in hiking, sightseeing, and exposure to volcanic environments, which carry inherent risks such as respiratory distress, injuries, and environmental exposure. Currently, emergency services are limited and largely centered within the park, underscoring the need for a more accessible, community-based healthcare presence.

Lanikai Brewing Company, Island Inspired™ Craft Beer
Brewery/Distillery @ 175-C Hamakua Dr, Kailua, HI 96734
Kailua @ 167 Hamakua Dr, Kailua, HI 96734 everyday 12p-10p
Volcano @ 19-4005 Haunani Rd, Volcano HI 96785 everyday 11a-9p
***Coming soon Brewpub on North Shore of Oahu

As a business owner operating in Volcano, I see firsthand the intersection of these issues—an aging local population, a steady influx of visitors, and limited healthcare infrastructure. The absence of even basic primary care services in such a setting is a clear gap in our rural health system.

SCR21 / SR18 does not mandate immediate construction or funding of a facility—it simply takes the prudent and necessary step of conducting a feasibility study. This study will allow the State and the Hawai‘i Health Systems Corporation to evaluate practical solutions, including part-time providers, mobile clinics, or hybrid models that can appropriately serve this unique community.

Establishing a rural health clinic in Volcano would:

- Improve health outcomes for a disproportionately older population
- Reduce emergency response strain by enabling early intervention
- Support visitor safety in a high-traffic, high-risk natural environment
- Strengthen the overall East Hawai‘i regional healthcare network

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support SCR21 / SR18.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Steve Haumschild, MBA

CEO & Brewmaster, Certified Cicerone®
Lanikai Brewing Company, Lanikai Spirits both Island Inspired™
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SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 7:15:36 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marie Elaine Lee	Testifying for Volcano Community Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am the Vice-Chair for the Volcano Community Association, of which there are approximately 180 members. We are a "medical desert" up here, having to drive either to Pahala or Keeau for urgent care, general medical and/or emergencies. Please move forward both these bills. It is essential that we move forward to determining how/when some medical care can be available in Volcano.

M. Elaine Lee, Volcano Community Association

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 12:27:47 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Morgan	Testifying for Volcano Community Association	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As President of the Volcano Community Association (VCA), with full support of Board Of Directors, we are writing in support of SR18 and welcome the HHSC with any assistance to address the study of feasibility for a clinic/medical access point for the Volcano area. This resolution is in alignment with, and further develops, the VCA's Volcano Community Plan Health Priority initiative.

This request comes from a long standing concern from the Community to our Board about access of health care, within a critical reaching distance. This concern, we feel, is valid not only to the local residents of Volcano, but also the high volume of tourism traveling through the Volcano area, as a Gateway to the Hawai'i Volcano National Park.

This need had also been validated by the Health Needs Assessment Survey conducted in the Volcano area, a reporting desire to have localized health services, indicating the geographical barriers of travel as a primary boundary to maintaining a regular health care relationship.

It is our sincere hope, that this Resolution be passed in the effort to provide care for the health and wellness of our geographically isolated community.

Thank you for considering the acceptance of this Resolution.

Mahalo Nui,

The Volcano Community Association

James Morgan, President

Elaine Lee, Vice-President

Jane Field, Treasurer

John Lakatos, Director (Membership Chair)

Patricia Knowlton, Director

Liana Kitase, Director

Ed Clapp, Director

LATE

Volcano Community Foundation
C/O PO Box 569
808 339-1699
Volcanocommunityfoundation.org

March 29, 2026

To: Committee Chair Senator San Buenaventura
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Legislature
Re: SR18 & SCR21. Requesting Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Conduct A Feasibility

Study For A Rural Health Clinic in Volcano, Hawaii

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

Volcano Community Foundation is a non-profit organization which actively supports a vibrant future for our community. We are writing in strong support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island. This resolution will address long standing geographic barriers to accessing timely and appropriate medical and healthcare services.

Volcano is an historic and growing gateway community adjacent to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. We are about two miles from an active volcano that periodically spews toxic gasses and tephra into the area. The median age of residents is 60 years old. Volcano residents must drive 60 miles round trip to Hilo to receive primary medical care and 40 miles round trip to Keaau for medication. The need for a clinic nearby is imperative for this population. A Volcano rural health clinic will also help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area. In addition, locating a clinic in Volcano will provide a health care safety net for the approximately 1.5 million visitors/ year to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp, who may sustain injuries during hikes, require non-urgent medical care, or experience respiratory effects from volcanic activity.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Mahalo,
The board of Volcano Community Foundation

COOPER CENTER COUNCIL

PO Box 1000, Volcano HI 96785

LATE

From: David Goodman, Treasurer
Cooper Center Council
P. O. Box 1000
Volcano, Hawaii 96785

March 28, 2026

To: Committee Chair Senator San Buenaventura
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Re: **SR18 & SCR21** Requesting Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Conduct A Feasibility Study For A Rural Health Clinic in Volcano, Hawaii Island.

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee

I have been a resident of Volcano for twenty two years and have also served as Treasurer of the Volcano Cooper Center Council since 2010.

The Cooper Center, a county facility, serves as the community center for the town of Volcano. Cooper Center is the hub of all major activities in our community and attracts residents to its facilities throughout the year. During the Covid shutdown, it served as a distribution center for goods and services for people of the upper Puna area. As such, our volunteers and myself are keenly aware of the many needs of our rural community.

Volcano is one of the most isolated communities on the Big Island when it comes to health care. It is a half-hour drive to the nearest urgent care facility in Kea'au and close to an hour to the Hilo Medical Center emergency room, longer if there is traffic. Travel time for routine medical appointments is equally long. This isolation also applies to visitors to the Volcano National Park.

In addition, Volcano has become home to a growing community of senior citizens. For seniors, the distance to medical services is an even greater problem. Advancing age brings on many conditions that require increased medical attention while at the same time reducing their ability to drive the distances required to obtain treatment, especially at night.

The Volcano Community Association's "Volcano Medical and Healthcare Needs Assessment", which was completed in 2025, validates what the majority of residents here need. We are an aging community, many with chronic medical problems. We have challenges driving 60 miles roundtrip (two hour commute) into Hilo to see our doctor.

We support the proposal to have Hawaii Health System Corporation's East Hawaii Regional Healthcare study the feasibility of placing some kind of healthcare service in Volcano. This would be an important first step in providing the residents of Volcano and the surrounding communities access to basic health care services they so urgently need.

Please support and pass both SR18 and SCR21.

Mahalo,
David Goodman
Volcano, Hawaii

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 3:55:19 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marsha Hee	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha ~

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and members of Senate Committee on Health & Human Services

Re: SR 18 & SCR21

I strongly SUPPORT SR18 & SCR21 calling for Hawaii Health Systems Corporation (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

This resolution will address the fact that I, as well as my husband and the majority of Volcano residents need to drive 60 miles round trip to receive primary medical care in Hilo or Pahala. A Volcano rural health clinic will help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area. Locating a health clinic in Volcano will also provide healthcare safety net for millions of visitors to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp who have injuries or experience respiratory effects from volcanic activity.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Sincerely,

Marsha Hee

Volcano, Hawaii Island

Reed Bertollette
19-4217 Ke Koa Nui Blvd
PO Box 705
Volcano HI 96785
808-769-2193
reed@bertopro.com
3/28/2026

To: Committee Chair Senator San Buenaventura
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Legislature

Re: **SR18 & SCR21**. Requesting Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Conduct A Feasibility Study For A Rural Health Clinic in Volcano, Hawaii

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

This resolution will address long standing geographic barriers to accessing timely and appropriate medical and healthcare services. The majority of Volcano residents drive 60 miles round trip into Hilo to receive primary medical care. A Volcano rural health clinic will also help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area.

In addition, locating a clinic in Volcano will provide a health care safety net for millions of visitors to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp, who may sustain injuries, require non-urgent medical care, or experience respiratory effects from Volcanic activity.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Mahalo,
Reed
Volcano, Hawaii

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 7:50:02 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorna Larsen-Jeyte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SCR21 and SR18 our critical bills for our Volcano community. The feasibility study will help us move forward towards a community health center which our aging population very much needs. My husband and I have been residence for 39 years and we owned an operated Kilauea Lodge for many of those years. Our staff of 50 mostly came from Volcano and we remain in touch with them and dozens of our neighbors we are all in need of a local health center. Please support our needs by passing these bills Mahalo.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 8:16:42 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am writing in **SUPPORT** of SCR21/SR18 that call for a feasibility study on establishing a Rural Health Clinic or comparable rural health access point to serve the Volcano community,

I am a resident of Volcano, and our community is in need of a Health Clinic offering primary and other health care services.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 9:27:11 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Janet Babb	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on the Island of Hawaii.

I have lived in Volcano for 35-plus years, and made the decision to stay here in retirement. However, as I grow older, I am realizing that I may not be able to spend the rest of my life here because if/when I am no longer able to drive to Hilo, I will have no easy access to medical care. Thus, I strongly support establishing a health clinic in our community.

This resolution will address long standing geographic barriers to accessing timely and appropriate medical and healthcare services, especially for senior citizens. As we age, the 60-mile round-trip drive into Hilo for primary medical care becomes increasingly difficult, if not impossible. A Volcano rural health clinic will greatly help meet our medical needs.

A rural health clinic in Volcano will also reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area, both young and old. Families with children need quick and easy access to medical care just as much as we senior citizens need it.

Locating a clinic in Volcano will also provide a safety net for the millions of people who visit Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp and may need health care for injuries or respiratory effects from Kilauea Volcano's gas emissions.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Mahalo,

Janet Babb, Volcano, Island of Hawaii

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 7:51:04 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

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

Comments:

I strongly support SR18 and SCR21.

I must travel, at a minimum, of 30 minutes to access health care. In an emergency, this is too long, especially for seniors.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 9:59:31 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald "Ron" Reilly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and Members of the HHS Committee.

I am in strong support of **SR18 and SCR2**, and the work of the **Volcano Health Collaborative**, to improve the health status of residents of the community of Volcano and its neighboring communities.

A HHSC feasibility study will help confirm the need of Volcano area residents, especially people who are car-less or house-bound, who have significant difficulty arranging transportation to and from Hilo or Pahala for their health care services.

Thank you for your support for SR18 and SCR2

- Ron Reilly, Volcano Village

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 10:37:10 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gloria Amaral	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair San Buenaventura, and Vice Chair McKelvey,

I have been a resident of Volcano for 25 years and am 77 years old. Because of visual problems, I can no longer drive. My husband is deceased and therefore I live alone. My doctors are all in Hilo and I go to Hilo 1 to 2 times per month for routine care, sometimes more often. I have to hire people, or arrange with a friend to drive me the 60 miles roundtrip to Hilo. It is getting extremely difficult to have to travel so far.

I strongly support the passage of SR18 and SCR21 because it will help us in Volcano bring attention to the great need for a local health care provider. We are a community of aging people and have no other recourse but to go to Hilo for care.

Thank. you for supporting and passing SR18 and SCR21.

Gloria Amaral

**Senate Resolution 18
and
Senate Concurrent Resolution 21**

2026 Hawaii State Legislature

Kyle Katase
PO BOX 1314, Volcano, HI 96785
katasekyle@gmail.com
3/28/2026

To: Committee Chair Senator San Buenaventura
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
2026 Hawai'i State Legislature

Re: **SR18 & SCR21**. Requesting Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Conduct A Feasibility Study For A Rural Health Clinic in Volcano, Hawaii

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

This resolution will address long standing geographic barriers to accessing timely and appropriate medical and healthcare services. The majority of Volcano residents drive 60 miles round trip into Hilo to receive primary medical care. A Volcano rural health clinic will also help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area.

In addition, locating a clinic in Volcano will provide a health care safety net for millions of visitors to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp, who may sustain injuries, require non-urgent medical care, or experience respiratory effects from Volcanic activity.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Mahalo,
Kyle Katase
Volcano, Hawaii Island

Liana Katase
P.O. Box 1314
Volcano, HI 96785
Llmk09@gmail.com
March 28, 2026

To: Committee Chair Senator San Buenaventura
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
2026 Hawai'i State Legislature

Re: **SR18 & SCR21**. Requesting Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Conduct A Feasibility Study For A Rural Health Clinic in Volcano, Hawaii

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

This resolution will address long standing geographic barriers to accessing timely and appropriate medical and healthcare services. The majority of Volcano residents drive 60 miles round trip into Hilo to receive primary medical care. A Volcano rural health clinic will also help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area.

As someone who grew up in Volcano and experienced severe asthma as a child, there were multiple times I needed to be transported to the hospital by ambulance. Thankfully the first responders from the national park would show up first and treat me much faster due to proximity. When you are unable to breathe, each moment counts. That was over 30 years ago, and our services have not improved much since. Now as an adult, my aging family is in need of healthcare that is accessible, especially due to limited transportation. I imagine this may be the case for many residents here.

In addition, locating a clinic in Volcano will provide a health care safety net for millions of visitors to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp, who may sustain injuries, require non-urgent medical care, or experience respiratory effects from Volcanic activity.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Mahalo,
Liana Katase
Volcano, Hawai'i

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 11:38:53 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shannon Fisher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SR18 and SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health care clinic or comparable healthcare access point in the Volcano area on Hawaii island.

Most residents travel 60 to 70 miles round trip to receive primary medical care. A Volcano rural health clinic will help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care, emergency rooms and improve health outcomes for residents and visitors in Volcano, HI. This resolution addresses long standing geographic barriers to accessing timely, appropriate medical and health services.

Having a clinic in Volcano will provide a safety net for millions visitors to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp who may sustain injuries, require non-urgent care or experience respiratory effects from the volcano.

Please vote "yes" on SR18 and SCR21

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 11:56:49 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ed Clapp	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please be aware of the need for medical care facilities in the Volcano Village area on the Big Island. As one of the most visited sites in the state as well as a community of retirees this area needs to have a medical facility of some sort for emergencies. The nearest medical facilities are up to 45 minutes away.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 12:23:00 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

This resolution will address long standing geographic barriers to accessing timely and appropriate medical and healthcare services. The majority of Volcano residents drive 60 miles round trip into Hilo to receive primary medical care. A Volcano rural health clinic will also help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area.

In addition, locating a clinic in Volcano will provide a health care safety net for millions of visitors to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp, who may sustain injuries, require non-urgent medical care, or experience respiratory effects from Volcanic activity.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Mahalo,

Susan Cabral

Volcano, Hawaii Island

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 1:11:13 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sandra C Hawaii	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair San Buenaventura and Vice Chair McKelvey,

I have been a resident of Volcano Village since 2006. I live in a multigenerational household with children and grandchildren. I am 77 years old and have been retired from the State Department of Education for ten years.

Because of Volcano's isolation from healthcare services and the distance needed to get to Hilo for my doctor, I strongly support SR18 and SCR21. I've gone to Kea'au Urgent Care about 5-6 times in the last year, because I couldn't get into Hilo to see my doctor as he's only a part time internist. I have chronic medical conditions that are monitored frequently with medication adjustments. My visits could have been easily taken care of by a primary care provider in Volcano. But it ended up costing my health insurance more money because I ended up at urgent care. This drives up the cost of healthcare for everyone.

When my grandchildren have simple colds and flus, or need well child care like vaccinations, we have to drive all the way into Hilo, which is 60 mile roundtrip.

Therefore, our family would like to see a healthcare provider in Volcano to help not only us, but other families as well.

Please pass SR18 and SCR21.

Mahalao for your help

Sandra Haiku

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 2:37:46 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew J Sutton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Andrew J Sutton
POB 1352

Volcano HI, 96785
anuhea0856@[gmail.com](mailto:anuhea0856@gmail.com)

[Date]

To: Committee Chair Senator San Buenaventura
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Legislature

Re: SR18 & SCR21. Requesting Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Conduct A Feasibility

Study For A Rural Health Clinic in Volcano, Hawaii

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:
I am writing in support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

These companion resolutions are a purposeful step towards addressing the long running healthcare services shortfall in East Hawaii, especially in the comparatively isolated areas spanning the Puna/Ka`u Districts. Those of us living in Volcano drive at least 60 miles round trip to reach healthcare providers. This significant distance has been made worse in recent years by rapidly increasing traffic congestion, the aging-up of the Volcano community, and the extra burden of competition for healthcare services with visitors to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Volcano Village itself. While a local clinic in Volcano would be very helpful, true healthcare-- a facility that incorporates a wellness component in addition to disease treatment could make a world of difference in our community and reduce the current unnecessary burden on Urgent Care offices and the Ka`u and Hilo Hospital's Emergency Departments.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.
Mahalo,

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 3:32:06 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Kunz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Senator San Buenaventura and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of these Resolutions. I am a resident of Volcano, Hawaii. I am 78 years old and in better health than many of my neighbors. Yet I too put off seeking health services because of the drive to Keaau or Hilo. And so many of my aging neighbors and friends cannot or should not drive, and they have virtually given up on seeking care short of a life threatening emergency. Many of these folks are impaired elderly and have difficulty managing their daily lives, seeking health care is not an option, they just slowly fade away, some never leaving their home. One neighbor and friend has his family bring him groceries every 2 weeks, otherwise he shelters at his decaying home. They can't bring him other services. He has so many medical issues, and he just does not have the energy to seek help when so far away. If there was a health care provider in Volcano, even on a very part time basis, his life would be vastly improved. He does not bother to seek refills for medications he was last prescribed years ago. He cannot drive and is too disabled to get to the local bus stop and take the bus. Even if a social worker or nurse was here one or two half-days a week, this would be such a benefit to this man and many more in the same situation. And I believe there are many like this - geographically isolated with the inability to attend to their very often grave issues, from advancing dementia, immobility and chronic medical conditions that could be stabilized sometimes with a minimum of support. It is very difficult to watch these situations. I realize I am blessed now, at 78, to have my faculties and have stable, well treated medical conditions. My heart goes out to those that deserve this as much as I and are excluded from basic and essential services. They deserve to be cared for.

Please pass the resolutions.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kunz

Volcano Hawaii

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 3:32:31 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pam Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a Kupuna and resident of Volcano and am in total support of this bill. We need this in rural Volcano since the drive to Hilo hospital is at least 45 minutes away and some cannot make that drive to seek help for medical help. It would be so helpful not just for Kupuna but for anyone living in Volcano to have a medical clinic/facility here in Volcano !

Mahalo 🌸

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 6:03:57 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Howard Shapiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear HHS Committee Chair, Vice Chair & Committee members,

I strongly support SR18. There is a great need in the Volcano area for health services. Thank you for voting YES on this measure.

Aloha,

Howard Shapiro

Volcano, Hawaii

1160 Puhau Street

Hilo, HI 96720

28 March, 2026

Written Testimony regarding bills SCR21/SR18

To: Senate Committee on Health and Human Services --- Hawaii Capitol

Dear Senators;

We have been Hawaii residents for over 50 years, and moved to Volcano in 1974 when we purchased a small plantation house on overgrown pastureland and started a small ranch ('Aina Maika'I Ranch). We cleared land, expanded our home, raised our two children who began school at the two-room Keakealani School. My main job was as a volcanologist at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, but our hearts were focused on the land and forests of Volcano and at expanding the ranch to provide food (beef, sheep and vegetables) for Volcano friends.

We helped found the Volcano Community Association and our road owners association (IRTALA). Marti and I were very much involved in all community organizations, and Marti helped prepare the Puna Community Development Plan.

We are not "city people" and would have wanted to live out our lives in Volcano, but the difficulty of obtaining medical services made it impossible to continue living at our ranch, which is now being managed by our daughter Pamela Scheffler. Reluctantly, when our limited mobility made trips to Hilo for medical care impossible for us, we purchased a small home in Waiakea Uka and moved to Hilo to be nearer to medical help.

Our Volcano community and surrounding population badly need some sort of rural health clinic where basic medical services could be provided. This needs to be adequate to avoid the need for residents to devote an entire day for trips to Hilo for such basic services such as routine checkups, laboratory lab sampling, and minor care.

We urge you to provide funding and supervision for a feasibility study for such services.... PLEASE SUPPORT SR18!

John & Martha Lockwood

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 7:35:53 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
sara kunz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have been coming to Volcano since I was a little kid growing up in Kona, and am happy to see the community growing. But over the years, as the population here increases- particularly with Kupuna, I have more and more concern about the wellbeing of its residents and their ability to get medical care. This town is majority elderly people- who have no choice but to drive an hour on increasingly dangerous (and oftentimes rainy foggy) roads to meet the basic needs of their growing healthcare demands.

Aside from the local population needs of more accessible medical care, there is an increasing number of tourists who come into the park and sustain injuries, especially in the recent eruption cycles.

I'm now 35, and I genuinely have concerns about my parents' ability to access care as they approach their 80's and live in Volcano. Where will they go when they can no longer drive to Hilo? Something as small as a cold that doesn't get tended to because of an inconvenient drive quickly progresses to more serious condition.

There are few towns on our island that have such a high density of Kupuna- Volcano needs a health care hub. As I look at the changes on the horizon, it's clear to me that if we wait any longer to act on this initiative- we will be too late.

Please pass SR18 and SCR21!

Mahalo for your consideration.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 7:43:26 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Connie Ritchey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice-chair McKelvey, and members of the committee,

I am writing in strong support of SR 18/SRC 21 which calls on Hawaii health systems corporations (HHSC) East Hawaii regional healthcare system to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable rural health access point for the Volcano area.

This resolution will address long-standing geographic barriers to accessing timely and appropriate medical and healthcare services. It will also help mitigate inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency room visits, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

Locating a rural clinic in Volcano will also provide a healthcare safety net for millions of visitors to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park who may be injured, experienced sudden health issues, or who are sensitive to hazards from volcanic activity.

Please vote YES for both SR 18/SCR 21.

Mahalo,

Connie Ritchey

Volcano, Hawaii

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 9:07:31 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Orr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As an older citizen, I am very aware of the difficulty of receiving health care for Volcano residents. We need more health care here in the village!



VOLCANO ART CENTER

WHERE PEOPLE, ART AND NATURE MEET

OUR MISSION

Volcano Art Center (VAC) is a nonprofit 501 (c) (3) organization founded in 1974 to develop, promote and perpetuate the artistic, cultural and environmental heritage of Hawai'i's people through the arts and education.

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19-4074 Old Volcano Road
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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SCR21 / SR18 REQUESTING A FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR A RURAL HEALTH CLINIC IN VOLCANO

My name is Emily Weiss, I am the COO of Volcano Art Center. I am writing in support of SCR21 / SR18, which seeks to evaluate the establishment of a rural health clinic for the Volcano community. Having managed the not-for business within this community for approx 17 years I can fully express the need of more accessible healthcare in this growing community.

Volcano is a uniquely rural and geographically isolated community on Hawai'i Island. Despite its small population it serves a much larger and more complex population when considering both demographics and visitor traffic. Much of the Volcano population resides in the Puna district, currently the fastest growing district in the state.

One of the most critical factors supporting this measure is the age of our community. Volcano has a median age of approximately 68 years, dramatically higher than the state average, with over 40% of residents aged 65 and older.

This is not a transient population—it is a community of kūpuna who require consistent, accessible primary care, chronic disease management, and timely emergency response.

At the same time, Volcano faces significant geographic and healthcare access challenges. The nearest major medical facilities are located in Hilo, approximately 28 miles away, requiring a 40–45 minute drive under ideal conditions.

Beyond its resident population, Volcano sits at the gateway to Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, one of the most visited destinations in the state. The area receives millions of visitors annually, dramatically increasing the number of individuals in need of potential medical services on any given day.

Since SCR21 / SR18 simply takes the prudent and necessary step of conducting a feasibility study. A study which will allow the State and the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation to evaluate practical solutions, including part-time providers, mobile clinics, or hybrid models that can appropriately serve this unique community. I respectfully ask the Committee to support SCR21 / SR18.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Emily C. Weiss

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 9:36:19 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

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

Comments:

Honorable Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey and Committee Members,

As a resident, lessor, and business owner in Volcano since the early 1970s, I have witnessed decades of transition in our community. My background in County, State, and Federal administrative roles—focused on economic development and community well-being—has given me a clear vantage point on our region’s history and its future needs. Today, a most pressing "gap" in infrastructure is the lack of accessible healthcare.

The greater Volcano area is currently "geographically straddled" between distant healthcare hubs. Residents must travel **45 minutes to Pahala or 45 to 75 minutes to Hilo**, depending on traffic. For our growing population of young families and retirees, as well as the million-plus visitors to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp, this distance is more than an inconvenience—it is a significant risk.

I support these resolutions for the following key reasons:

- **Demographic Demand:** The Volcano population is expanding, and local institutions—including the Volcano School of Arts & Sciences and the Volcano Golf Course—create high-density "points of need" that currently lack nearby medical support.
- **Economic Impact:** Healthcare is not just a social service; it is an economic driver. A local clinic would create jobs and further stabilize the community.
- **Infrastructure Barriers:** Limited public transit makes the long drive to Hilo or Pahala-Naalehu impossible for many of our most vulnerable residents.
- **Community Readiness:** Organizations like the **Volcano Community Association** and the **Volcano Health Collaborative** are already organized, capable, and ready to partner with the State to bridge this gap.

A feasibility study conducted by the Hawaii Health Systems Corporation is the essential next step to quantify these needs, identify potential sites, and explore public-private partnerships.

I respectfully ask for your **favorable consideration of SCR 21 and SR 18** to ensure the health and safety of the Volcano community.

Mahalo nui loa.

Diane L. Ley

Volcano

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 9:55:20 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherrill Glass	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing this testimony in strong support of SR18/SCR21 requesting the feasibility study for a rural health clinic in Volcano, Hawai`i. I need to drive 50 miles round trip to visit doctors in Hilo. This is a hardship for myself (72) and for my wheelchair-bound husband (67). A rural health clinic here in Volcano would alleviate a lot of hardship by seniors and other patients living in this area. It would also help the 1.5 million visitors to the nearby Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp each year with minor injuries and illnesses. I urge you to please vote yes on SR18/SCR21.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 10:10:34 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Geiger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Kathleen Geiger and I am a resident of Volcano Village, Hawaii, residing in Cymbidium Acres, 96785. I am in support of the study to determine the need for health care in our community. My husband and I are in our 70's, and finally have reached the point where we need medical assistance. I was on a waiting list for the East Hawaii Health Clinic for 6 months, my husband for over a year. Shortly after I began seeing an excellent PA, she left to work somewhere else. My husband no longer drives outside the immediate area so I have taken on the responsibility of driving. He is not satisfied with the quality of care he is receiving so he has given up trying to find a doctor. There are many residents in Volcano who are seniors who need health care but are either on long waiting lists, unable to find a doctor, or do not drive anymore. Unfortunately, many of us need to use Urgent Care, as a an alternative, and usually wait until our health needs have reached a critical stage. A clinic in Volcano would be welcomed by so many, young and old, alike. I implore the legislature to pass SR 18 and SRC 21. I think the study would reveal the critical need for a health care clinic in the Volcano Community. Mahalo for your time.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 10:18:13 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Aulii Nathaniel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SCR21. I live, work, and have children who go to school in Volcano. Getting medical care generally requires us missing half to a full day of school or work. Our aging population often find themselves having to move because of the difficulty in accessing care. A rural health care center would greatly benefit our community. Mahalo nui for considering this resolution.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 10:56:49 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bradley Greenlee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly support SR18 and SCR21. The larger Volcano community and Volcanoes National Park is very underserved when it comes to healthcare. For most of us, primary healthcare is on the other side of Hilo, requiring a travel time of 1.5 to 2 hours during business hours, which interrupts workdays and school days sufficiently to often require makeup time in a schedule that grows tighter and tighter as more and more appointments are required due to childcare, aging, and repeat health concerns because of the proximity to the Volcano, such as tephra and vog. As well, visitors to the park and surrounding areas need local healthcare access due to the potential hazards inherent to exploring unfamiliar environments.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 11:09:16 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

My name is Diane Ware. I am 78 years old and resident of Volcano since 1990. I am in strong support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

This resolution will address long standing barriers to accessing timely and appropriate medical and healthcare services for Volcano which had a population of over 4,000 in 2020 and growing. The GP draft predicts a population over 10,000. The majority of Volcano residents drive 60 miles or more round trip into Hilo to receive primary medical care. Many elderly residents that can't drive avoid healthcare services entirely. A Volcano rural health clinic will also help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area.

Mahalo for your support to pass this measure,

Diane Ware Volcano Golf Course subdivision

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 11:59:05 AM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marquita Granda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am a resident of Volcano Village and am full support SR18. I have been on waitlists for a primary care in Hilo for the past two years. I am still waiting. We need closer, more accessible care for our folks who are unable to easily commute to Hilo. As a health care provider, I am very aware of how underserved we are in rural Hawaii and would love to be one of the providers staffing the clinic here. I care deeply about the health of this community. Mahalo for considering.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 12:33:44 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Liane Briggs	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SR18 and SCR21. I live in Kaneohe, and I have visited Volcano many times during the past 20+ years. At one time, we were thinking of retiring in Volcano, but the lack of medical care has been a road block. A feasibility study would be a first step to provide medical care to this isolated rural community. I ask you to vote in favor of these resolutions.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 12:35:44 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Terence Spencer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I and my partner Gayle Chavez both strongly support this bill to work towards the increase in health care options for residents of the Volcano and wider Puna Mauka area. Many of the elderly folks, of which there is a high percentage in our population, often find it difficult to get to Hilo for appointments and such. It is also a growing community so this kind of study and planning is important in looking to provide for the future needs of the community. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 12:50:58 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ellen O'Dunn	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Ellen O'Dunn and I am a resident of Volcano. I am also the Operation Chief for the Volcano Emergency Response Team and the Administrator of Volcano Out & About and Volcano Out & About - PUBLIC, two community news social media groups with over 2000 members who must be Volcano residents, own property in Volcano, or work in Volcano. These positions place me in a unique position to directly see the needs of this community and one of the most pressing needs is the ability to have better access to healthcare.

According to census data, the average age of Volcano residents is over 60. I saw proof of this first hand when, at the start of the massive 2018 volcanic event of Kilauea, my team and Civil Defense were going door-to-door checking on residents. Many had health issues that required frequent trips to their doctors. We also have struggling young families, many where parents must work multiple jobs to support their household - 38% of the students in our local charter school are in low income households. Local fuel for vehicles regularly hits close to \$6 a gallon. New homes are being built at an above average rate all over our community.

As our community needs increase, the ability to find medical treatment becomes more and more dire. Many practices are not accepting new patients, or they don't accept certain health insurance, or their doctors have moved away for greener pastures. I personally must travel once a month to Mango Medical in Waimea, a distance of over 50 miles away that takes me an hour and forty-five minutes to drive on a good day, for treatment of a chronic health problem. Why? Because their Hilo branch closed and I couldn't find another primary care physician who was taking new patients and/or who accepted my insurance. I've been doing this for 10 years and this trip is getting more and more difficult, and more expensive, to make.

We need health care in Volcano. Please pass this bill to do the study which will lead the community I love one step closer to being healthier and more resilient.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 12:51:15 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Russell Atkinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am a 75 year old resident of Volcano, Hawai'i. Although this area has great beauty and a wonderful community, we lack local access to any health care. I strongly support having a professional investigation of our needs and any possible services.

LATE

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 1:44:32 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Patricia R Knowlton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SCR21.

LATE

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 3:21:02 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeff Hamilton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SR18 and SCR21.

Thankyou,

Jeff Hamilton

LATE

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 3:40:56 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeffrey Mermel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Legislators: I write in strong support of SR18 and SRC21 which calls on Hawaii Health Systems East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

Most residents of Volcano must now drive a 60mile round trip to Hilo to receive primary medical care. Establishing a rural health clinic up here will help reduce inappropriate use of Urgent Care and Emergency Rooms.

In addition, the nearby National Park receives 1.3 million visitors a year who may get injured or experience respiratory effects from the active volcano.

Recently the Volcano Community Association completed a Medical and Health Care Services Need Assessment in which our residents clearly identified the need for a health clinic and other health care services as a top priority.

Please consider approval of the feasibility study.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeffrey Mermel

President Emeritus

Volcano Community Association

LATE

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 4:26:35 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Eileen Matsumoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I stand in strong support of SR18 and SCR21 for the purpose of providing timely and accessible health care services for the millions of visitors to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park

Over the last 10 years, my family and I visit Volcano National Park twice a year. We stay in Volcano Village accommodations an average of 3 nights. We are concerned that there still is no health care service available in the Volcano community for its residents, nor its visitors.

I respectfully request your Committee's unanimous support for passage of SR18 and SCR21 in order to begin a feasibility study of bringing health care services to Volcano.

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 4:44:25 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen Mulliken	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to strongly support this bill SR18/SRC21. This study will strongly prove the need for a medical facility in Volcano. Volcano residents are widely senior citizens who need medical services that are nearby rather than far. The travel for them is particularly hard being that with age comes eyesight problems, driving issues, no help from county and state services. Cancer patients have it particularly hard because they need blood tests before their chemo therapy. That requires 2 trips to Hilo within a weeks time. Thank you for your consideration and please vote YES on SR!*/SCR@!

LATE

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 5:03:29 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of SR18/SRC21 regarding a study for the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic in Volcano Hi. A volcano rural health clinic will also help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms 30 miles away. such a facility will also serve the National Park and Kilauea Military Camp. Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21. Thank you.

Susan Dvorak, Volcano HI

LATE

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 7:19:27 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bradley Weisz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Ladies & Gentlemen, good evening.

My name is Bradley Weisz and I live in Volcano Village, HI. I am submitting this testimony in complete support of a feasibility study on establishing a rural health clinic or rural health access point to serve the Volcano community.

We are a diverse community (both elderly and young) that would benefit immensely from the establishment of a rural health clinic. I believe it is long over due and should receive one of the highest of priorities for state of Hawaii support.

Let's provide the Volcano community with the essential services that it needs and deserves. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Aloha and All the Best,

Bradley Weisz

USMC Col (Ret)

LATE

**Senate Resolution 18
and
Senate Concurrent Resolution 21**

2026 Hawaii State Legislature

Janet Wilcox
19-4056 Kilauea Rd,
Volcano, Hawai'i 96785
March 29, 2025

To: Committee Chair Senator San Buenaventura
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
2026 Hawai'i State Legislature

Re: **SR18 & SCR21.** Requesting Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Conduct A Feasibility Study For A Rural Health Clinic in Volcano, Hawaii

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

This resolution will address long standing geographic barriers to accessing timely and appropriate medical and healthcare services. The majority of Volcano residents drive 60 miles round trip into Hilo to receive primary medical care. A Volcano rural health clinic will also help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area.

In addition, locating a clinic in Volcano will provide a health care safety net for millions of visitors to the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp, who may sustain injuries, require non-urgent medical care, or experience respiratory effects from Volcanic activity.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Mahalo,
Janet Wilcox
Volcano, Hawai'i

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 8:57:15 PM

Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jamie Barlow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative, even with in this fiscal climate... I would expect the cost to be low and the benefits to be significant. This initial survey and scoping, will add a lot of value to planning and enable our leg a chance to have better data for moving forward.

Again this is the first steps to effective planning.

Mahalo!

March 29, 2026

LATE

To: Committee Chair Senator San Buenaventura
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Legislature

From: Zachary Mermel

Re: **SR18 & SCR21**. Requesting Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Conduct A Feasibility Study For A Rural Health Clinic in Volcano, Hawaii

Aloha e Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

I am a lifetime resident of Volcano, am recently married, and now have an infant daughter. My wife and I both work in Volcano. My retired parents also live here and volunteer in a number of community activities.

I am writing in strong support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawai'i Island.

We all are challenged by having to drive long distances for medical care, pharmacy, lab tests, and radiology procedures in Hilo just for routine care.

In addition, the cost of transportation, such as the high cost of gasoline, is often a deterrent for many elders within our community who are on fixed income. Many such residents are unable to afford ride-share options, or find the time constraints of riding the County bus too challenging.

In closing, a Volcano rural health clinic is seriously needed, not just for our community but also for the many visitors that visit Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and who also stay in vacation rentals in the wider Volcano area.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Mahalo,

Zachary Mermel
Volcano, Hawaii

LATE

Melissa Kunz
19-4100 Kalani Honua Loop
Volcano, HI 96785

March 28, 2026

To: Committee Chair Senator San Buenaventura
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Legislature

Re: **SR18 & SCR21**. Requesting Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Conduct A Feasibility Study For A Rural Health Clinic in Volcano, Hawaii

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

As a Volcano resident and new parent, I am seeking ways to support my family's well-being for the long term while living in and stewarding the place we care most about. I strongly support SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island.

In the last year since my daughter was born, my family has experienced firsthand the burden of traveling to and from Hilo for routine and urgent care. While Volcano tends to be known as a community of retirees, working people live and are employed here, too. Driving to Hilo and back for a single medical appointment takes multiple hours out of a regular workday. While we'd drive any distance for our child, the reduction in income and family time is a major disincentive for me and my spouse to seek routine medical care for ourselves. This resolution will address the barriers of distance and time to healthcare, and support the availability of the regular preventive care Volcano families like ours need.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Mahalo,

Melissa Kunz
Volcano, HI

LATE

Julia Williams
19-4261 Ke Koa Nui Blvd. (PO Box 569)
Volcano, HI 96785
808 339-1699
volcanowilliams@gmail.com

March 24, 2026

To: Committee Chair Senator San Buenaventura
Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Hawai'i State Legislature
Re: SR18 & SCR21. Requesting Hawaii Health Systems Corporation Conduct A Feasibility
Study For A Rural Health Clinic in Volcano, Hawaii

Aloha Chair San Buenaventura, Vice Chair McKelvey, and members of the Committee:

I am writing in strong support of SR18/SRC21, which calls on Hawaii Health Systems Corporation's (HHSC) East Hawaii Regional Health Care System to study the feasibility of establishing a rural health clinic or comparable healthcare access point for the Volcano area on Hawaii Island. This resolution will address long standing geographic barriers to accessing timely and appropriate medical and healthcare services.

Volcano is a gateway community adjacent to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. We are about two miles from an active volcano that periodically spews toxic gasses into the area. The median age of residents in 60 years old. Volcano residents drive 60 miles round trip to Hilo to receive primary medical care and 40 miles round trip to Keaau for medication. A Volcano rural health clinic will also help reduce inappropriate utilization of urgent care and emergency rooms, and improve health outcomes for all residents in the Volcano area. In addition, locating a clinic in Volcano will provide a health care safety net for the approximately 1.5 million visitors/ year to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea Military Camp, who may sustain injuries, require non-urgent medical care, or experience respiratory effects from Volcanic activity.

Please vote YES on SR18/SCR21.

Mahalo,

Julia Williams

LATE

SR-18

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 8:24:30 AM
Testimony for HHS on 3/30/2026 1:07:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathleen English	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to support this feasibility study. As a resident of Volcano for over 55 years, I have seen first-hand that our community is growing and aging rapidly. The nearest clinic of any kind is 20 miles away in Keaau. The nearest pharmacy is 20 miles away in Keaau. Even a part-time clinic would be a huge improvement, and would benefit residents as well as the many visitors who come to our community due to our proximity to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Please vote in support of this bill as the first step in the process that could lead to improved healthcare in our area. Mahalo for your consideration.