
A BILL FOR AN ACT

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina
2 revealed severe shortcomings of the health care system serving
3 the residents of the Gulf Coast. This has induced other regions
4 of the country to assess the ability of their health care
5 systems to withstand natural disasters.

6 The Office of Domestic Preparedness of the Department of
7 Homeland Security issued a directive requiring each state to
8 assess its ability to evacuate and shelter residents in the
9 event of a disaster. One particular concern was the special
10 populations served by hospitals and long term care facilities.

11 Hawaii sent a disaster relief team to Louisiana that
12 included members of various health care organizations. They
13 gained first-hand knowledge of Katrina's destructive force and
14 its effect on health care.

15 It became apparent from the Katrina experience that smaller
16 residential health care facilities on the Gulf Coast, such as
17 nursing homes, were not constructed to withstand strong winds.
18 Hawaii is in a similar situation. Recent discussions with



1 nursing home executives revealed that they were uncertain
2 whether their facilities could resist the effects of a
3 hurricane. Most felt they would be compelled to evacuate their
4 residents because of this uncertainty. However, the
5 availability of shelters that are specially designed for nursing
6 home residents is insufficient.

7 State officials are currently working to establish special
8 needs shelters and to improve evacuation procedures. However,
9 these officials concede that the number of actual and potential
10 shelters are inadequate to house and protect the large numbers
11 of potential evacuees.

12 The evacuation of nursing home residents should be
13 considered only after all other options have been explored.
14 Allowing nursing homes to "shelter in place" their residents and
15 staff is often the safest and most practical solution. However,
16 this option requires confidence in the structural integrity of a
17 nursing home.

18 Hospitals are typically more prepared to address disasters
19 than nursing homes. For example, hospitals have comprehensive
20 plans that will be implemented in the event of a pandemic or
21 terrorist attack. However, the Katrina experience underscores



1 the need to assess hospital facilities as well as to determine
2 their ability to withstand hurricanes.

3 The purpose of this Act is to fund a study to assess the
4 structural integrity of each hospital and nursing home in
5 Hawaii.

6 SECTION 2. The department of health shall undertake a study
7 to assess the structural integrity of all hospitals and nursing
8 homes in Hawaii. The assessment shall be conducted by
9 registered professional engineers qualified to conduct
10 structural analysis and knowledgeable in the effects of
11 hurricanes. The assessment shall include rating each facility
12 based on its ability to survive the likely effects of hurricanes
13 in categories I, II, III, IV, and V.

14 Information derived from the assessment shall be provided
15 to facility owners and operators and used to support risk-based
16 disaster plans. The information shall also be provided to local
17 and state civil defense officials and used to support evacuation
18 decisions. A summary of the assessment shall be provided to the
19 legislature not later than twenty days prior to the convening of
20 the regular session of 2007.

21 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
22 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$, or so much



1 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2006-2007, for a
2 study to assess the structural integrity of all hospitals and
3 nursing homes in Hawaii.

4 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
5 health for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

Hurricane Preparedness; Structural Assessment; Hospitals

Description:

Funds a study to assess the structural integrity of each hospital and nursing home facility to determine their ability to withstand hurricanes. Makes appropriation. (SD2)

