



LATE DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES AND PUBLIC HOUSING

Senate Concurrent Resolution 85/Senate Resolution 47 – Urging the Associations of Apartment Owners and Condominium Unit Owners' Associations in the State to Develop Emergency and Evacuation Plans for Residents, Including Provisions for Seniors and Residents with Special Health Needs

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 85/Senate Resolution 47 which urges the Association of Apartment Owners and Condominium Unit Owners Association in Hawaii to develop emergency evacuation plans for residents, including provisions for seniors and residents with special health needs.

DCAB is one of three co-conveners of an Interagency Working Group that has developed an Interagency Action Plan for the Emergency Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities and Special Health Needs. One of the basic premises of the "2008 Interagency Action Plan for the Emergency Preparedness of Persons with Disabilities and Special Health Needs" is that "Emergency readiness is foremost an individual's personal responsibility, or, if the person is in the care of another person, the caregiver's responsibility. Increased personal readiness for a person with a disability or special health need is even more important to ensure that the person's unique challenges or needs are met."

Urging the Associations of Apartment Owners and Condominium Unit Owners to develop emergency and evacuation plans for residents, including persons with disabilities and special health needs is consistent with the 2008 Interagency Action Plan. We urge the Associations to include residents with disabilities in discussions to develop emergency and evacuation plans, beyond just the voluntary survey mentioned in the resolution. Including residents with disabilities also offers an avenue for direct contact with other residents with disabilities to ensure all residents are aware of emergency readiness, as well as procedures and evacuation routes to use during an emergency. Therefore, we feel including residents with disabilities will provide an invaluable resource in the development of the plans.

We urge your favorable consideration of these resolutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

PATRICIA M. NIELSEN
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director