

Testimony of Gerald Peters
and The Hawaii Lumber Products Association

(PBS) House Committee on Public Safety Thursday Feb 12, 2009. Room 309. 8:30 am RE: HOUSE BILL 1568 – MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

Chair Hanohano, Vice Chair Aquino, and Members;

My name is Gerald Peters. I am testifying on behalf of The Hawaii Lumber Products Association, as well as myself as an individual with nearly 20 years experience in disaster preparedness, and General Licensed Contracting in Hawaii, in support of this legislation.

We are in strong support of this bill, and would like to remind the Committee that approximately \$5.4 million funding from the corpus of the hurricane relief fund authorized under the Disaster emergency Preparedness Act of 2005 was returned unspent last July (2008). There is nearly \$200 million in the hurricane relief fund. Investing in mitigation incentives is already authorized under the HHRF statute, and has a direct nexus to the fund's overall purpose to lessen the magnitude of future disasters such as hurricanes.

It is important to note that tens of thousands of our 1960's era single wall plantation homes, the weakest in our statewide inventory, have been paid off recently and hurricane insurance is no longer required since there is no mortgage requiring it.

At the same time, hurricane insurance premiums for single wall houses have risen from the \$350 average per year in the 90's to over \$2000 a year and in some cases more. Therefore some sizeable undetermined number of these homeowners have dropped hurricane coverage and stand to be financially destroyed and homeless when hit by the next hurricane or earthquake or other disaster. Only the Red Cross can fill this void and provide short and long term shelter, food, clothing, and comfort.

Thank you.

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