

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



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DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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In reply, please refer to:
File:

**COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY
HB 0247, Related to Disaster Preparedness**

**Testimony of Chiyome Leinaala Fukino, M.D.
Director of Health**

**February 4, 2010
8:30 A.M.**

1 **Department's Position:** The Department respectfully opposes this measure because of the potential for
2 complications and because the department and other state and federal agencies have been providing
3 effective emergency management support to the County of Hawaii under the incident management
4 system since the start of this elevated vog condition.

5 **Fiscal Implications:** Uncertain.

6 **Purpose and Justification:** This bill seeks to establish a disaster preparedness interagency task force
7 within the Department of Accounting and General Services. The task force would be comprised of
8 several state departments as well as selected federal, county, and non-governmental agencies. Overall
9 task force responsibilities include, but not limited to, the study, planning, and establishing priorities for
10 responding natural hazards and other disasters that may affect the state. In addition, the measure
11 requires the task force to address several vog-related issues currently or possibly affecting the state.
12 These issues include, but not limited to, the following: emergency management, health and
13 environmental protection, schools, transportation, agricultural relief, and tourism.

14 We are concerned that unless the laws on civil defense and emergencies are changed, this task
15 force will overlap with existing response organizations, without clear gain and with the risk of

1 increasing the amount of effort needed for communication. In general, we favor flexibility in the
2 establishment and changes of multiagency coordination systems rather than prescribing them by statute.

3 We wish to emphasize to this committee that the department has taken a very active and helpful
4 role in supporting the Hawaii County's emergency management role since the current situation at
5 Kilauea occurred in February of 2008 with the laze condition and the increased emissions from
6 Halemaumau crater vent in March, 2008. We continue to be actively engaged to the present day
7 working with Hawaii County and in concert with other state and federal agencies. The department's
8 immediate, essential role is to provide appropriate environmental health risk analysis and assessment in
9 support of the county's overall risk management responsibilities. We provide this support while
10 operating in a multiple jurisdictional, multiple agencies framework which is essential to managing this
11 complex, dynamic situation.

12 Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this important measure.

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 247
A BILL RELATING TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

PRESENTATION TO THE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

MAJOR GENERAL ROBERT G. F. LEE
DIRECTOR OF CIVIL DEFENSE

February 4, 2010

Chair Hanohano and Committee members:

I am Major General Bob Lee, Director of Civil Defense, State Department of Defense. I am providing written testimony in opposition to House Bill 247.

House Bill 247 establishes a disaster preparedness interagency task force to mitigate the effects of vog or sulfur dioxide. The proposed bill also establishes the disaster preparedness task force under the Department of Accounting and General Services.

The development of plans, programs, and initiatives to mitigate the effects of sulfur dioxide and vog throughout the State and particularly on the island of Hawaii requires the cooperation and collaboration of many organizations, public and private, including the cooperation of affected residents. In June 2008, Governor Lingle recognized this and established an interagency task force to address the effects of the sulfur dioxide hazard on various communities and counties. This interagency task force is under the coordinating leadership of the State Department of Defense.

Rather than introducing legislation that duplicates the work of the State Department of Defense and other agencies, we recommend that the legislature consider other measures that would benefit affected communities. These may include: special tax relief initiatives for residents who can purchase air monitors, air conditioning systems, and safe rooms; and, the designation of lands or agricultural lots for the relocation of farmers economically impacted by the effects of sulfur dioxide and vog hazards.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony that opposes this bill.

Date: 02/04/2010

Committee: House Public Safety

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn Matayoshi, Interim Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 247 RELATING TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS.

Purpose of Bill: Establishes a disaster preparedness interagency task force to develop a disaster preparedness and mitigation plan for Hawaii. Directs the task force to take various actions to study and mitigate the effects of vog.

Department's Position: The Department of Education, in conjunction with the Department of Health, State and Hawaii County Civil Defense, and local community first responders, has already implemented emergency plans for all schools to deal with the health threats associated with vog. In addition the majority of Hawaii County schools have sulfur dioxide meters to help aid in deciding response actions. Many of the vog-related issues contained in this bill are already being addressed by various departments i.e., lead in water (Clean Water Branch, DOH). The Department of Education believes this bill is not necessary, but will defer to the State Civil Defense Director on this matter. If the bill is enacted, the Department of Education would be an active participant in the proposed interagency task force.