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February 11, 2009

The Honorable Faye P. Hanohano, Chair
House Committee on Public Safety
State Capitol, Room 309
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: H.B. 990 Relating to Disaster Preparedness
Hearing Date: February 12, 2009 @ 8:30 a.m.

Aloha Chair Hanohano and Members of the Committee on Public Safety:

I am Mary Begier, member of the Government Affairs Committee, here to testify on behalf of the Hawai'i Association of REALTORS® (HAR) and its 9,600 members. HAR **supports H.B. 990** which establishes the Office of Disaster Preparedness and a Disaster Preparedness Commission to develop a disaster plan for Hawaii including identification of hazards and hazard zones, mitigation policies, requirements, incentives, and best responses.

In Hawai'i, we have seen threats from natural disasters, such as, earthquakes, tsunamis, storms, etc. We have also learned from other States in times of disaster that proper planning is critical to the safety and welfare of the public and their property. The Legislature has made great progress in terms of disaster preparedness and this measure seems like the next logical step.

The establishment of the Office of Disaster Preparedness could be a productive means to coordinate the safety and protection of life and property. In the event of a disaster in Hawaii, it is imperative that the Federal, State, and County governments be coordinated. Moreover, having the knowledge of established hazard zones and mitigation policies can be critical in minimizing losses in times of disaster.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.