

HB 1868

RELATING TO EMERGENCY SHELTERS.

Authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds to fund the retrofitting of public school buildings so they can also be used as emergency shelters.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS AND EDUCATION

House Bill 1868 - Relating to Emergency Shelters

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1868 Relating to Emergency Shelters that authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds to fund the retrofitting of public school buildings so that they can also be used as emergency shelters.

In 2005, DCAB co-convened an Interagency Working Group for the Emergency Preparedness of People with Disabilities and Special Health Needs with State Civil Defense and the Department of Health. Since that time, DCAB and the Working Group developed an "Interagency Action Plan for the Emergency Preparedness of People with Disabilities and Special Health Needs" to ensure that emergency management efforts and plans statewide included people with disabilities and other access and functional needs. A major effort involved the retrofitting of public school buildings by providing technical assistance to ensure accessibility of the facilities per the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG). In 2013, DCAB trained state and county staff to review sites selected as emergency shelters, such as public schools, in order to retrofit the shelter and include accessibility features so individuals using the emergency shelter will have access to the site. This goal meets several of the goals set in the "2009 Interagency Action Plan for the Emergency Preparedness for Persons with Disabilities and Special Needs." That plan is currently being revised with the assistance of all stakeholders in the emergency management community, including individuals with disabilities and other access and functional needs.

DCAB acknowledges all of the work previously accomplished by State Civil Defense, the county emergency management agencies and all partner agencies. We look forward to a continued partnership with all public and private agencies to develop emergency shelters and emergency management plans that are accessible to and include the whole community.

We believe that the additional funds used to increase the capacity of available shelters should include not only hardening of facilities but also accessibility to ensure that the retrofitted shelters are usable by all in the community, including persons with disabilities.

We defer to the Departments of Defense and Education regarding the amount of funding required to adequately address the purpose of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

BARBARA FISCHLOWITZ-LEONG
Chairperson
Legislative Committee

FRANCINE WAI
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Date: 03/17/2014

Committee: Senate Public Safety
Intergovernmental and Military Affairs/Senate
Education

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 1868(hscr587-14) RELATING TO EMERGENCY SHELTERS.

Purpose of Bill: Authorizes the issuance of general obligation bonds to fund the retrofitting of public school buildings so they can also be used as emergency shelters.

Department's Position:

The Department of Education supports this bill. The DOE appreciates the intent of this bill. Retrofitting school facilities that have been identified as emergency shelters during disasters is a necessity. The DOE would like to ensure its involvement in this process so that all retrofit projects follow the necessary requirements regarding school facilities projects. The DOE would appreciate coordinating with the Department of Defense in this matter.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this bill.