

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2543
A BILL RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

PRESENTATION TO
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND (WAL)

BY

MOSES KAOIWI
Interim Administrator, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA)

Chair Yamane, Vice-Chair Todd and Members of the Committee.

Aloha - I am Moses Kaoiwi, Interim Administrator of HI-EMA. HB 2543 seeks to establish within the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency an emergency management watershed team. The stated purpose of this team is to clear certain stream mouths to avoid flooding from hurricanes. It is a limited purpose team and would concentrate on only seven streams in the Mililani area of Honolulu.

HI-EMA offers the following comments regarding this measure:

- The bill should consider Hawaii Revised Statutes sec. 46-11.5, which already requires the county jurisdictions to provide “for the maintenance of channels, streambeds, streambanks, and drainageways, whether natural or artificial, including their exits to the ocean, in suitable condition to carry off storm waters; and for the removal from the channels, streambeds, streambanks, and drainageways and from the shores and beaches any debris which is likely to create an unsanitary condition or otherwise become a public nuisance.”
- The same section also requires private property owners to maintain and keep privately owned streams and waters clear of debris.
- In addition, HRS sec. 127A-18 currently gives the Governor authority to designate “state employees, agents, contractors, or representatives to enter private property at reasonable times to mitigate situations deemed by the governor to be hazardous to the health and safety of the public,” including “Cleaning streams and waterways to mitigate or prevent flooding or other hazards.” HRS sec. 127A-18(3)

The purpose of HI-EMA’s hazard mitigation efforts is to prepare and protect all the people of Hawaii and not restrict its activities to a limited jurisdiction. Even assuming such a limited focus team is warranted, it should not reside within HI-EMA.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2543. I do sincerely appreciate the measure’s recognition and focus on the importance of community resilience and preparedness regarding our water hazards.

Moses Kaoiwi 808-733-4300
Moses.kaoiwi@hawaii.gov

HB-2543

Submitted on: 1/31/2018 8:31:23 AM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2018 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nathan Yuen		Support	No

Comments:

I am Nathan Yuen, Conservation Chair for the Sierra Club Hawaii Chapter. I support HB2543 which gives the authority to access any state, county, or private real property within the State for the limited purpose of clearing the mouth of certain streams in preparation for the imminent approach of a hurricane.

I believe that this authority should not just pertain to the mouths of streams but should also extend to streams where bridges and other structures can become clogged with tree branches and other debris which can cause flooding much higher upstream.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify on this bill. I strongly support the granting of this authority to clear streams and prevent flooding.

HB-2543

Submitted on: 1/31/2018 12:29:43 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/2/2018 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu	Support	No

Comments:

I support the establishment within the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency an emergency management watershed team, which shall have the authority to access any state, county, or private real property within the State for the limited purpose of clearing the mouth of certain streams in preparation for the imminent approach of a hurricane.

I would also like to propose that after the emergency, any impacts to archaeological resources and native Hawaiian practices are documented and submitted to the appropriate agencies.

reference: <http://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/story/36145475/critics-disappointed-with-flood-control-plan-for-maui-river>