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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

CONVENING THE MULTIPLE LANGUAGES EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION WORKING  
GROUP.

1           WHEREAS, as one of the most culturally diverse states in  
2 the nation, Hawaii has one of the highest proportions of non-  
3 English speakers in the United States; and  
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5           WHEREAS, about one in four Hawaii residents speak a  
6 language other than English at home, and about one in eight  
7 Hawaii residents speak English "less than very well", giving  
8 Hawaii one of the highest rates of persons with limited English  
9 proficiency, per capita, in the United States; and  
10

11           WHEREAS, a significant percentage of visitors to Hawaii  
12 have a primary language other than English; and  
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14           WHEREAS, residents and visitors who lack proficiency in  
15 English are at great risk in emergency situations in which they  
16 are unable to understand written or verbal warnings or  
17 notifications, including warnings or notifications about  
18 dangerous conditions, impending severe weather, and appropriate  
19 emergency responses; and  
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21           WHEREAS, preparing for and responding to emergencies is  
22 especially important, but sometimes very difficult, for  
23 residents and visitors of limited English proficiency; and  
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25           WHEREAS, residents of and visitors to Hawaii with limited  
26 English proficiency have expressed concerns regarding access to  
27 and comprehension of emergency notifications; and  
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29           WHEREAS, bridging the communication gap is essential to  
30 ensuring equal access for all community members, especially in  
31 emergency situations; and



1 WHEREAS, providing language access in disaster and  
2 emergency management is critical to ensure that all of the  
3 State's residents and visitors, regardless of English  
4 proficiency, can access essential resources like shelters,  
5 medicine, social services, and other disaster relief; and  
6

7 WHEREAS, effective and appropriate communication that  
8 reaches all who may be impacted by a disaster or emergency event  
9 is critical to protecting lives, families, and communities; and  
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11 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency coordinates  
12 emergency notifications and response to disasters; and  
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14 WHEREAS, the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency's planning  
15 should include a means for residents and visitors of limited  
16 English proficiency to receive important emergency  
17 notifications; and  
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19 WHEREAS, the convening of a working group of stakeholders  
20 is a significant step toward sharing information, developing  
21 ideas, and taking action to ensure meaningful access for  
22 Hawaii's residents and visitors with limited English proficiency  
23 through the provision of emergency notifications in multiple  
24 languages; now, therefore,  
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26 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
27 Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of  
28 2019, the Senate concurring, that a Multiple Languages Emergency  
29 Notification Working Group be convened to develop a plan to  
30 provide emergency notifications in multiple languages; and  
31

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Multiple Languages  
33 Emergency Notification Working Group is requested to develop a  
34 plan to provide emergency notifications in multiple languages  
35 for people with limited English proficiency, including:  
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- 37 (1) Determining the scope of implementing emergency  
38 notifications in multiple languages, including the  
39 specific languages needed and the method or methods by  
40 which the notifications should be provided;  
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1 (2) Developing a process to ensure that emergency  
2 notifications in languages other than English are  
3 accurate, culturally appropriate, meaningful, and  
4 timely; and  
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6 (3) Identifying any necessary resources to effectuate the  
7 purpose of this measure, such as the cost of services,  
8 necessary information technology software, or foreign  
9 language translators who can provide timely  
10 translation services during disasters; and  
11

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Multiple Languages  
13 Emergency Notification Working Group is requested to comprise  
14 the following members or their designees:  
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16 (1) Director of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, or  
17 the Director's designee, who shall serve as chair of  
18 the working group;  
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20 (2) Director of Health;  
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22 (3) Director of Human Services;  
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24 (4) Chairperson of the Board of Education;  
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26 (5) Director of Business, Economic Development, and  
27 Tourism;  
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29 (6) Chair of the University of Hawaii Board of Regents;  
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31 (7) Executive Director of the Office of Language Access;  
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33 (8) Executive Director of the Disability and Communication  
34 Access Board;  
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36 (9) Program Director of the Office on Equality and Access  
37 to the Courts;  
38

39 (10) Emergency Management Officer of the Maui Civil Defense  
40 Agency;  
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1 (11) Deputy Director of the County of Hawaii Civil Defense  
2 Agency;

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4 (12) Director of Emergency Management of the City and  
5 County of Honolulu; and  
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7 (13) Administrator of the Kauai Civil Defense Agency; and  
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9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chair of the working group  
10 invite a representative from the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism  
11 Association to serve as a member; and  
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13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Multiple Languages Emergency  
14 Notification Working Group is requested to submit to the  
15 Legislature a report of its findings and recommendations,  
16 including any proposed legislation, no later than twenty days  
17 prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2020; and  
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19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
20 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of the  
21 Hawaii Emergency Management Agency; Director of Health; Director  
22 of Human Services; Chairperson of the Board of Education;  
23 Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Chair  
24 of the University of Hawaii Board of Regents; Executive Director  
25 of the Office of Language Access; Executive Director of the  
26 Disability and Communication Access Board; Program Director of  
27 the Office on Equality and Access to the Courts; Emergency  
28 Management Officer of the Maui Civil Defense Agency; Deputy  
29 Director of the County of Hawaii Civil Defense Agency; Director  
30 of Emergency Management of the City and County of Honolulu;  
31 Administrator of the Kauai Civil Defense Agency; and President  
32 and Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism  
33 Association.  
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OFFERED BY:

*[Handwritten signatures]*

*[Handwritten signatures]*  
Pule Colonilla Heakawa  
Randy M. Lulu  
*[Handwritten signature]*



# H.C.R. NO. 113

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