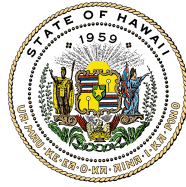


DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



ARTHUR J. LOGAN
MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL

KENNETH S. HARA
BRIGADIER GENERAL
DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
3949 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96816-4495

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

**TESTIMONY ON
SENATE BILL 346 SD1, RELATING TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

Before the House Committee on
PUBLIC SAFETY, VETERANS, & MILITARY AFFAIRS

By

Thomas L. Travis
Administrator, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA)

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Gates, and Members of the Committee

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) **opposes** Senate Bill 346 SD1.

Senate Bill 346 SD1 requires the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to identify key evacuation routes; prohibits the planting of large trees along evacuation routes; requires the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to identify existing large trees along evacuation routes and trim, spray, or remove the trees if the trees have the potential to obstruct the evacuation route; and appropriates funds to the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency.

The concept of this proposal is sound, but implementation presents several nearly insurmountable difficulties. First, evacuation routes are numerous and varied, depending on the circumstances driving the evacuation. (For example, much of Honolulu, including many major roads south of H-1 would be in flood zones under some circumstances). Second, the scope of the effort to identify and regulate trees on all possible routes needed as evacuation routes is beyond the capability of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency. To develop the capability, the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency would need to significantly increase personnel, significantly increase operating budget, and almost certainly need new facilities. Fourth, defining evacuation routes in law removes flexibility from emergency planning, planning that responds to circumstances and different combinations of threats. Fifth, the State faces many and varied threats. The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency can best respond when flexibly establishing priorities in dealing with those threats, rather than implementing a patchwork or regulatory initiatives to deal with portions of the threats.

Note: My comments represent HI-EMA concerns at the state emergency management level only. I would defer to the separate comment/testimonies of the county emergency management agencies, as they would be the jurisdictions impacted by this legislation at the local level.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 346 SD1.

Thomas L. Travis: Thomas.l.travis@hawaii.gov; 808-733-4300



Testimony before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY,
VETERANS, & MILITARY AFFAIRS

Wednesday, March 13, 2019 10:30 A.M.
Conference Room 430

RE: SB346 SD1 RELATING TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Chair Takayama, Vice Chair Gates and Members of the House Committee on Public Safety, Veterans, & Military Affairs:

Trees for Honolulu's Future (TFHF) is a non-profit organization with a vision for an appropriately tree-shaded island that preserves and enhances our quality of life, especially in the face of climate change.

While we appreciate the spirit and intent of SB346 SD1, we OPPOSE the legislation in its current form. The bill uses a "one size fits all" approach by prohibiting trees from being planted within fifteen feet of the roadway portion of an evacuation route. Instead, the standard should be whether a tree, either existing or new, is appropriate and safe in the location where it is located. The only way to do this is to engage in a comprehensive inventory of existing conditions and then articulate guidelines for not just planting, but critically, maintenance or removal and replacement, of trees along evacuation routes. This work should be done by recognized, professionally qualified, arborists.

Additionally, the word "prune" should be used in lieu of "trim" in the bill – the former is the correct nomenclature used by the International Society of Arboriculture, the largest and preinent professional organization of arborists. It is unclear what the word "spray" is intended to convey. Again, our concern is that this bill attempts to legislate in a broad swath, but the reality is that each situation (e.g. pruning, removal, or replacement) must be examined based on conditions in each location and tree. We pointed these items out when the bill was being heard in the Senate, but no changes were made.

We suggest this legislation be HELD until such time as a comprehensive approach be developed and the scope of funding/needs be determined. A legislative resolution suggesting a task force approach and report may be a better vehicle to focus state resources on this very important and worthy topic. TFHF would be happy to participate in such an effort as we currently work to coordinate and reinforce the efforts of government agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments. Mahalo.

Tom Dinell
President

Visit us online at: www.TreesForHonolulu.org Contact us at: info@TreesForHonolulu.org