



DEPT. COMM. NO. 343

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December 12, 2019

Senator Ronald Kouchi, President
Hawai'i State Senate

Representative Scott Saiki, Speaker
Hawai'i State House of Representatives

Mr. President and Mr. Speaker:

Senate Concurrent Resolution 40 (2018)

The Hawai'i State Legislature in 2018 passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 40 (SCR 40). SCR 40 resolved that the State of Hawai'i Department of Defense convene an emergency management agency review task force to investigate key issues concerning the 2018 false missile alert. The Adjutant General delegated actions required by SCR 40 to the Administrator, Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA).

SCR 40 directed that the task force submit a preliminary report prior to the 2019 session and then a final report, to include findings and recommendations, prior to the 2020 session. HI-EMA requested a delay in late 2018. The preliminary report was not submitted. The strategic plan attached will serve as the final report.

The SCR 40 identified key issues to be examined along with the answers are summarized below:

1. The first key issue of SCR 40 is to review HI-EMA operations with respect to notifying the public of imminent ballistic missile attacks.
Response: Following the false missile alert, changing global political directions and a review of HI-EMA's statutory role in a nation-state attack on the USA, the warning program for a missile attack was shelved.
2. The second key issue of SCR 40 is to have the task force consider whether the HI-EMA should be the entity that notifies the public of imminent ballistic missile attacks. **Response:** The question as to who is responsible to pass the alert is being discussed both within the Federal Executive Branch and through legislative initiatives in Congress. As of December 2019, HI-EMA would be informed but has no specific protocol for handling an alert for a missile attack. Rather the alert, in the most

unlikely event it occurs, would be handled by the general protocol for unplanned and rare casualties and emergencies.

3. The third key issue of SCR 40 is to evaluate whether HI-EMA is capable of notifying the public of imminent ballistic missile attacks in light of the January 29, 2018, internal investigative memorandum and its findings on the agency's preparedness, protocol procedures, personnel, training protocols, leadership matrix, communication system procedures, and lines of communication with the United States Pacific Command.

Response: This question is mute in that HI-EMA no longer has a specific protocol to notify the public of imminent ballistic missile attacks. But in addressing underlying issues of HI-EMA performance, the **State of Hawai'i Executive Summary of Lessons Learned — 2018 Disasters** along with the **All-Hazards Preparedness Improvement Action Plan and Report** present a comprehensive view of the needed road forward for improvement of HI-EMA. HI-EMA developed 2018 Lessons Learned from the Kaua'i and O'ahu flooding, the Kīlauea Eruption, and Hurricanes Lane and Olivia. The report recognizes challenges with the state emergency response and pointed out the Agency's weaknesses and gaps. (see attached)

HI-EMA has completed the Strategic Plan, addressing issues from both the **State of Hawai'i Executive Summary of Lessons Learned — 2018 Disasters** and the **All-Hazards Preparedness Improvement Action Plan and Report**. The plan addresses the goals and objectives of the Agency for the next five years. (see attached).

The strategic plan was developed with input and approval of the task force members required by SCR 40. Then the SCR 40 task force members approved the strategic plan as the final report required by SCR 40.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any comments, questions, or concerns.

Sincerely,



THOMAS L. TRAVIS
Administrator of Emergency Management

C: David Y. Ige, Governor
MG Kenneth S. Hara, Director/HI-EMA

Attach: State of Hawai'i Executive Summary of Lessons Learned [2018 Disasters]
Strategic Plan [HI-EMA]

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STATE OF HAWAI'I
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF LESSONS
LEARNED—2018 DISASTERS

Kaua'i and O'ahu Flooding, Kilauea Eruption, Tropical Cyclones Lane and Olivia

OVERVIEW

From April 2018 to September 2018, the State of Hawai'i experienced an unprecedented series of disasters and near disasters that resulted in three major disaster declarations and two emergency declarations under the Stafford Act. These disasters tested the state's emergency response and provided an opportunity to identify needed improvements.

This report identifies issues with the State's overall emergency response, as well as specific issues in the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC), with a focus on the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency's (HI-EMA's) response and coordination. It then identifies a way ahead from what was learned.

Incidents requiring activation of the SEOC between April 2018 to September 2018 are examined. While separate after action reviews could have been conducted for each disaster, the proximity of these events enmeshed response efforts in a way that makes it more fruitful to evaluate the whole.

The following is a summary of the incidents covered by this report.

KAUAI AND O'AHU FLOODING

On April 13, 2018, historic rains swept over the County of Kaua'i, destroying homes and causing massive landslides that closed roadways and isolated communities for months. The same storm system also caused extensive flood damage to parts of East O'ahu.

KILAUEA ERUPTION

On May 3rd fissures began appearing in Leilani Estates along the East Rift Zone of Kilauea volcano. Over the next several weeks, 24 fissures appeared in Lower Puna. The lava flows knocked out critical infrastructure, covered roadways, and forced evacuations as homes were isolated or destroyed. Significant public health concerns emerged as the entire island was subjected to weeks of poor air quality due to sulfur dioxide (SO₂), hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), hydrogen fluoride (HF), and sulfuric acid (H₂SO₄) emitted by the volcano. By the end of the eruption, over 700 homes had been destroyed and many others remained inaccessible. Hawai'i County has entered a complicated and protracted recovery process that will last years. For both the flooding and lava incidents, the disaster declaration authorized Individual Assistance, in addition to Public Assistance and the Hazard Mitigation Grants. Individual Assistance had not been part of a disaster declaration in the State since 2008.

TROPICAL CYCLONES LANE AND OLIVIA

As the eruption subsided in August, the State and counties were then threatened by a trio of tropical cyclones. Hurricane Hector in early August was followed ten days later by Hurricane Lane, and then by Hurricane Olivia in early September. Though only Hurricane Lane significantly impacted the State, each storm prompted an emergency operation center activation and protective measures, taxing resources of government and voluntary agency partners.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: OVERALL STATE OPERATIONS

Several issues were beyond the scope of what HI-EMA alone can address. Tackling these issues will require the collective attention of State agencies, and, in some cases, action by the State's executive leadership or legislature.

State Emergency Operating Center

The State Emergency Operating Center (SEOC) had insufficient space to allow for effective operations, did not have drinking water (pipes are contaminated with lead), did not provide effective space for the Governor and his staff, and presented a worn and sometimes slipshod appearance.

Funding of State Operations

An absence of commonly understood fiscal policies complicated, slowed, and inhibited emergency response.

INITIAL AVAILABILITY OF EMERGENCY FUNDS

Although the policy was that State agencies cover initial emergency response from their operating budgets, many State agencies were reticent to fund their emergency expenses—including staff overtime, procurement of emergency resources, and engagement in repair work.

While some expenses were reimbursable by FEMA, getting reimbursed can be a protracted and cumbersome process. Agencies were required to upfront costs and were responsible for a 25% cost-share. Some expenses for critical functions were not reimbursable by FEMA.

While HRS127A establishes a Major Disaster Fund (MDF), in practice the MDF was not enough for initial expenses. The annual appropriation was quickly exceeded by Department of Defense operations, which included activities of the Hawai'i National Guard (HING) and HI-EMA

emergency expenditures. Finding more money to deposit into the MDF required the Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) to find funds, which generally involved taking from the budgets of the same agencies trying to fund emergency needs.

Even if the MDF were adequately funded, additional gaps related to fund administration must be addressed.

1. There was no written policy for State agencies on documenting eligible expenditures or requesting reimbursement.
2. HI-EMA, which administers the fund, only has one position to validate and track disbursements. This level of effort is insufficient during large disasters that involve millions of dollars in reimbursements.

FINANCIAL IMPOSITION ON DEPLOYED STATE WORKERS

Support of emergency operations required HI-EMA and other State agencies to send workers to affected counties, often for a week or more at a time. There was no system to quickly advance funds to workers, requiring them to cover their expenses and seek reimbursement later. Early in 2018, some agencies lacked a way to directly pay for hotels, requiring workers to front those costs as well.

NO EXPENDITURE REPORTING PROCESS

There was no statewide protocol in place for departments to report what they have committed to relief operations—this resulted in State leadership having little visibility on the cost of the disaster.

NO DEFINED AUTHORITIES FOR EXPENDITURE LEVELS

The State did not have pre-defined levels of authority for making financial commitments. Resources needed to save lives and protect property, such as those required to mitigate the lava threat to Puna Geothermal Venture (PGV), were hugely expensive and required rapid authorization. It was unclear at what level leaders could authorize expenditures and when the action needed to be elevated for Governor's approval.

Insufficient Emergency Response Staff and Inconsistent State Agency Engagement

A strength noted was the engagement and commitment of many State agencies in supporting emergency operations. But inconsistencies in departmental willingness to perform emergency duties remained an area in which improvement was needed.

LACK OF DEDICATED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL IN STATE DEPARTMENTS

The level of competency of those fulfilling emergency roles varied widely. Some departments responsible to execute critical response functions did not have dedicated emergency management positions or planners.

INSUFFICIENT RESOURCES DEDICATED TO STATE OPERATIONS

While many departments had assigned SEOC representatives, some departments had not built substantial departmental response capacity beyond those few individuals. Some departmental emergency plans were not executed, and additional workers were not activated.

Lack of backup to department representatives to the SEOC complicated continuing emergency operations for an extended period.

GAPS IN STATE AGENCY PARTICIPATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF EMERGENCY ROLES

Not all departments had identified State Emergency Support Function (SESF) representatives as required by Administrative Directive 15-01. Some agencies with significant assets were not represented in the emergency response framework.

WIDESPREAD SHORTFALLS IN CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS

Overall, State departments lacked hardened departmental operations centers (DOC's) needed to allow continuity of operations. Additionally, those with DOC's had not always identified backup power and communications. Also, there was a general lack of manning and procedural documents to support continuity.

Improvement Plan Recommendations for Statewide Operations

FUNDING FOR EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

The legislature should increase funding to the Major Disaster Fund (MDF). Statewide policies on disaster expenditure authorization, reporting and documentation must be implemented to provide daily visibility of financial commitments to response efforts.

FINANCIAL PROCESSES TO SUPPORT EMERGENCY WORKERS

The State should look at resources used by other response organizations, such as FEMA, to provide workers funds to cover expenses while deployed. All State agencies should be

required to obtain emergency P-cards and develop processes for how cards will be used to pay for hotels.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE STAFF AND STATE AGENCY ENGAGEMENT

State agencies with primary roles assigned by the State's Emergency Operation Plan should have dedicated emergency personnel and/or planners that report to department leadership. A dedicated staff position will allow support for regular department training to expand the pool of emergency workers and the development and maintenance of executable agency plans.

REVIEW OF STATEWIDE EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND DEVELOPMENT OF PERIODIC REPORTS

HI-EMA should develop a strategic plan focused on statewide emergency response, focusing on the overall ability of leadership and all State departments and agencies. Several questions need to be answered:

- Is the Governor's Administrative Directive 15-01 sufficient to organize State emergency response?
 - How does each department and agency stack up against the requirements of 15-01?
 - Is each department's continuity of operations plan sufficient? Has it been implemented and are personnel considerations addressed?
 - What internal and external communication are available? Are they sufficient?
 - Do State agencies with primary roles have dedicated emergency planners and/or personnel that report to department leadership? Do the dedicated staff positions support regular departmental training to expand the pool of emergency workers and the development and maintenance of agency plans?

Additionally, as an interim measure, HI-EMA should develop and publish a quarterly report outlining issues with emergency management readiness to the Governor and all Directors.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS—EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ISSUES

The highest return on investment comes in addressing those issues that are a consequence of what this paper calls the "small state problem." Several things lead to the small state problem.

The Small State Problem

First, a fundamental principle of emergency management is that all action is controlled at the lowest level possible. The county decides what is to be done and what resources it needs. The state provides those additional resources, but the county maintains control of the effort. Similarly, the state identifies the additional resources needed from the federal government and passes those requests to FEMA. FEMA is not nominally responsible for the emergency management efforts organized by the county or the resource requests from the county and state.

But several catastrophes, most prominently caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Maria, led to political pressure for FEMA to do more—even when the underlying problem was the inability of the local levels of government to perform. Consequently, FEMA leans forward more and more, asking for pre-disaster support and coercing states and counties to prepare in the way FEMA sees fit. Considerable state effort is needed just to meet FEMA requirements for grant funding.

Second, FEMA programs to help survivors and to strengthen preparation are not coherent. Instead, the programs are administered separately, sometimes under different laws or regulations. For example, there are over two dozen individual programs that form the broad category of individual assistance, each with its own rules and procedures. Additionally, the mitigation programs of the federal government go across several federal departments and agencies, each with separate rules and procedures.

The consequence is that the state needs experts in many programs, programs that might not be awarded to the state for many years. For example, individual assistance is awarded to Hawai'i on the average of once every ten years. State experts in these programs need to maintain programs, often complex, to make these programs available when needed.

But in a small state, the experts are one-deep. The emergency management agency becomes a group of one-deep experts across a large range of functions. When a disaster strikes, these one-deep experts must be used in operational roles, taking them away from their programs.

It takes over six months to replace a state worker.^{1,2} During this vacancy, the program developed by the state worker falls apart. It can take several years to rebuild the capability

¹ In HI-EMA when someone quits it takes even longer, sometimes over a year.

² Emergency management is a relatively “new” professional field and in small states there can be a shortage. Salaries are not competitive—federal pay is much higher and city pay is often higher. A federal GS-13 with allowances makes as much or more than the HI-EMA administrator.

In short, the small state problem is that there are too few experts when disaster looms or has struck.

Recommendations to Address Shortfalls in HI-EMA and SEOC Operations

INSUFFICIENT STAFF PERSONNEL AND TRAINING SHORTFALLS.

There were an insufficient number of HI-EMA staff to fill critical positions with trained personnel. Critical positions were one person deep and, to cover gaps, staff were assigned to positions significantly outside their job classification/compensation. (e.g. clerical staff were tasked as the lead in critical roles.) Existing vacancies exacerbated staffing shortfalls. Personnel could no longer perform blue sky functions.

Solutions include:

- Remove HI-EMA personnel and manning from the Civil Service system. A responsive, flexible, and aggressively hiring system is needed in HI-EMA.
- Develop a Reserve Corp to provide surge staffing. This Reserve Corps must be compensated, funded and trained for blue sky and incident activities.
- Develop a Contractor Surge Capability by having contracts in place to provide emergency management capacity and expertise.
- Expand the number of public information officers
- Invest in sending more staff to formal training, allowing staff to fill in at diverse positions.
- Send personnel on Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) assignments to provide experience and opportunities to train during grey skies.
- Identify generalist positions in the SEOC that all staff should be able to support. Identify baseline knowledge/tasks and training that will be required of all staff.

- Identify SEOC positions that require specialized knowledge, training or skills. Map blue sky positions best suited to transition to those roles.
- Establish a training schedule to ensure all staff meet baseline requirements.

NO LOGISTICS SECTION AND NO EMERGENCY PROCUREMENT PROCESS

During normal blue skies operations, HI-EMA made few purchases, instead relying on the State Department of Defense for such items. Under these circumstances, there was no urgent demand for either a logistics section or for the capability to make procurements.

During disasters of a magnitude that occurred in 2018, the number of requests for assistance (RFA's) that were processed each day was small enough to use normal State and DOD procedures to deal with the issues. But a problem occurs when the number of RFA's increase, as would happen in a catastrophic situation (e.g., if Hurricane Lane had not subsided just before landfall) or a catastrophe.

In that case, the ability to collect, process, and write contracts to deliver requested resources would be the cornerstone of HI-EMA's success or failure. But HI-EMA did not have the capability to make emergency procurements nor did HI-EMA have the ability to handle even simple logistics operations.

To address the shortfalls in HI-EMA capability in logistics and procurement, the following was needed:

- Establish HI-EMA's logistics and procurement capability. During blue skies, HI-EMA will enter into agreements to allow those involved with procurement and contracts to work with Department of General Services (DAGS).
- Work with DAGS to draft and implement a State disaster procurement policy and related tools/resources.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Recommendations for Statewide Operations

- Replace the EOC with a modern facility
- Develop procedures for funding and financial management for emergency operations
- Improve Financial Processes to Support Emergency Workers
- Establish trained and compensated Reserve Corps
- Develop strategic plan for statewide emergency management
- Develop and publish a quarterly report outlining issues with emergency management readiness to the Governor and all Directors

Recommendations for HI-EMA and the SEOC

- Remove HI-EMA personnel and manning from the Civil Service system. A responsive, flexible, and aggressive hiring system is needed in HI-EMA.
- Develop a Reserve Corp to provide surge staffing. This Reserve Corps must be compensated, funded and trained.
- Develop a Contractor Surge Capability by having contracts in place to provide emergency management capacity and expertise.
- Expand the number of public information officers
- Invest in sending more staff to emergency management training, especially those required to fill in at positions for which they have not been trained.
- Send personnel on EMAC assignments to provide experience and opportunities to train for "grey skies".
- Identify generalist positions in the SEOC that all staff should be able to support. Identify baseline knowledge/tasks and training that will be required of all staff.
- Identify SEOC positions that require specialized knowledge, training or skills. Map blue sky positions best suited to transition to those roles.
- Establish a training schedule to ensure all staff meet baseline requirements.
- Establish a HI-EMA logistics section and emergency procurement capability.
- Work with DAGS to draft and implement a state disaster procurement policy and related tools/resources.



Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency

2020 - 2025

Five-Year Strategic Plan

VISION

A ready and resilient Hawai'i

MISSION

Lead and support Statewide efforts to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from disasters and emergencies

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: Enable a Statewide framework where stakeholders are prepared and ready

OBJECTIVE	MEASUREMENT	Prerequisites
1.01 Fulfillment of all AD15-01 requirements by State Departments and Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of AD 15-01 fulfilled; Quarterly Report to the Governor on progress to date. 	Governor authorization to enforce
1.02 A documented and specified financial framework to deal with initial grey sky spending	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MDF in place and accessible; Spending authorities specified; Roles of HI-EMA, DOD financial and DB&F specified. 	Commitment of DOD and DB&F directors to achieve an agreement in a timely manner; commitment of expert staff and time
1.03 A disaster framework clearly detailing the roles and responsibilities of the State and Counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on detailing the framework; Identification of a State Disaster Recovery Coordinator. 	Support and direction from the Governor and the four Mayors
1.04 Expanded training and exercise programs for State, County and NGO preparation and coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress in expanding training and exercise programs; Quarterly assessment by Preparedness Chief with concurrence by Executive Officer. 	Budgetary resources available for pre- and post-training follow-up
1.05 An approved Governor's Emergency Management Strategic Plan	Completion of Governor's Strategic Plan	Governor authorization to prepare; Commitment from the Counties and NGOs
1.06 Key pre-event MOU's/MOA's prepared and in place.	% of key agreements completed and signed	Key agreements identified and prioritized by HI-EMA and the Counties
1.07 Office of Homeland Security successfully merged into HI-EMA	Progress in completing the merger	Agreements by the Administrators of HI-EMA and OHS
1.08 A cadre of trained volunteers and contracted reserve personnel available during grey skies	No. of volunteers and contracted personnel trained and available	
1.09 A Statewide program for certifying emergency management personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on implementing the program; No. of State and County personnel meeting certification requirements. 	A mutual aid agreement among the Counties committing to the program; Acceptable standards
1.10 Embedded HI-EMA staff in all Counties and in selected State Departments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of MOA's signed between HI-EMA and other agencies; Number of Staff embedded. 	Available and trained HI-EMA staff for assignment

* THESE ARE ACTION ITEMS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN. THE STRATEGIC PLAN IS IN PRINTING, WE WILL DELIVER COPIES IN MID-LATE JANUARY 2020.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: Support Stakeholders as they prepare for and mitigate against, respond to and recover from Catastrophic Incidents

OBJECTIVE	MEASUREMENT	Prerequisites
2.01 A Communication Plan outlining protocols and procedures: 1) to alert and warn the public and 2) to notify pertinent intra-state partners in all emergency incidents	% of document completed	
2.02 Upgraded financial procedures that service partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders satisfaction with HI-EMA process of financial support; A clear roadmap for providing financial support to stakeholders; % distribution of 2018 Disaster and Mitigation Grant funds. 	
2.03 An Outreach Program to educate individuals and communities of opportunities and responsibilities to protect themselves including but not limited to: sheltering in place, family planning/preparation, forming CERTs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of households which are prepared for a major incident; % of households who will shelter in place. 	Agreements with Counties and NGOs as to mutually agreed upon roles and responsibilities
2.04 Coordination and support for state agencies and Counties as they prepare Mitigation/Recovery Plans for Critical Infrastructure	% of plans completed	Convening pertinent public and private agencies; agreements to fund the detailed research and to prepare the plans
2.05 Coordination and support for state agencies and Counties as they prepare Mitigation/Recovery Plans for critical Mass Care elements	% of plans completed	Convening pertinent ESF annexes focusing on Mass Care elements; agreement to fund the detailed research and to prepare the plans

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: Deliver quality emergency management services to the State.

OBJECTIVE	MEASUREMENT	Prerequisites
3.01 All critical HI-EMA positions filled	% of positions filled	"Critical" positions identified; Up-dated PDs and up-graded salaries approved
3.02 Additional support capacity in HI-EMA's Finance and Administration Branch	Progress in securing three new support staff individually specializing in Personnel, Finance and Grants management	Approval in the budget
3.03 Robust procurement capability built into the HI-EMA Logistics Branch	Progress in building capability	Review of current capability
3.04 Approval by the Legislature and the Governor for a new SEOC	Approval	Clear HI-EMA strategy to achieve
3.05 EMAP certification for the State Emergency Management Program	Certification	Clear HI-EMA commitment and strategy to achieve
3.06 Regularly held, HI-EMA internal training program for general core competencies	Number of HI-EMA employees having successfully completing the training	
3.07 A flexible, effective, and efficient all hazards outdoor siren capability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of legacy sirens upgraded; Number of new sirens Installed. 	
3.08 An appropriately staffed and resourced State Warning Point performing excellently	Quarterly assessment by Ops Chief with concurrence by Executive Officer	
3.09 HI-EMA personnel are participants as providers in EMAC	Number of HI-EMA employees prepared to participate as providers in EMAC	Completion of the EM Certification program