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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



SUZANNE D. CASE  
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COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**  
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**Testimony of**  
**SUZANNE D. CASE**  
**Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on**  
**WATER AND LAND**

**Wednesday, February 5, 2020**  
**1:30 PM**  
**State Capitol, Conference Room 229**

**In consideration of**  
**SENATE BILL 2911**  
**RELATING TO BOATING REPORTS**

Senate Bill 2911 proposes to require fire chiefs and ocean safety directors of each county, in addition to the Director of Public Safety and the police chief of each county, to transmit to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) a copy of every report relating to boating accidents or the theft, loss, or recovery of vessels; and to require all reports submitted pursuant to section 200-27, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to be unredacted. **The Department strongly supports this Administration measure.**

Boating accident data collected by the Department becomes part of the United States Coast Guard (USCG) Boating Accident Report Database (BARD), a massive collection of statistics on incidents in all 50 states and all U.S. territories. The data allows USCG and partnering organizations to see trends in operator use of boating equipment and boating practices that increase or decrease the risk of fatalities, disappearances, and injuries. Every partner agency aims to enter the best, highest quality data possible into the BARD.

The Department believes the amendments proposed in this measure will ultimately result in improved safety for all boaters and boating communities across the country as well as ocean users who interact with those boaters. There is a longstanding misperception that incident reports relating to boating accidents are generated by county police departments. However, in reality, fire departments and ocean safety agencies are the entities that respond to these types of incidents and generate reports that are most useful to the BARD.

Each year, there are about two to three dozen incidents that constitute a "boating accident" and meeting the criteria for entry into the BARD. The Department does not anticipate a significant

addition to the workload of each of the agencies proposed to be included in this measure. With more comprehensive reporting, there is potential to decrease the number of incidents occurring each year through more informed decision-making on the subject of boating safety.

The Department highlights the openness and the spirit of cooperation exhibited by the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD) in relation to this measure. While investigating the feasibility of this measure, HFD provided direct contacts and introduced the Department to a new HFD system for requesting incident reports. The positive benefits resulting from this interaction have surpassed all of the Department's expectations.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.