

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Thursday, February 20, 2020
10:35 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2915, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO LIFEGUARD SERVICES AT STATE PARK BEACHES**

Senate Bill 2915, Senate Draft 1 proposes to allocate Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) revenues to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) to cover lifeguard service expenses incurred at state park beaches and appropriates funds out of the state parks special fund for lifeguard services at state park beaches. **The Department strongly supports this Administration measure.**

The Department's request in the Administration's budget for \$5 million in funds from the TAT would fully fund lifeguard service contracts for 5 Division of State Park (State Parks) beaches heavily patronized by both residents and out of state visitors. The cost of these contracts when added to the cost of State Parks staff salaries is currently 80% of the State Parks operating budget. The remaining 20% of the operating budget is insufficient to execute State Parks' core mission of the optimal management of state parks units and associated infrastructure and resources.

Currently several methods of financing are deployed to meet the fiscal obligation of these contracts. However, due to years of increased costs (salary increase and extended hours) and a lack of commensurate funding increases for State Parks, the actual cost is greater than what is being paid. This is creating tension between the Counties and State Parks due to this disparity and the obligation to continue services – which due the record tourism patronage is more critical than ever. In addition, the cost of equipment and tower upgrades could also be funded, rather than just salary.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

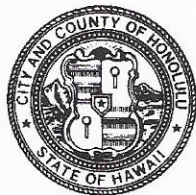
This measure would provide a consistent, stable and single funding source to then allow State Parks to repurpose operating funds for needed equipment, vehicles, additional security, staffing and to initiate a program to begin to address the \$40 million backlog in repair and maintenance for the State Park system. In addition, should this measure be passed, the 2.1 million in general funds included in the Administration's proposed budget to offset the years of increased cost in the lifeguard contracts could then remain in the general fund.

The branding of Hawaii as a scenic and attractive resource destination, specifically our renowned beaches, has contributed to this unparalleled patronage. The investment of the \$5 million from the TAT is warranted to ensure the continued safety of residents and visitors to our State Park beaches. This is both a morally imperative action and critical to support the reputation of Hawaii as a safe destination.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

HONOLULU EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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KIRK CALDWELL
MAYOR

JAMES D. HOWE, JR.
DIRECTOR

IAN T.T. SANTEE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

February 20, 2020

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee on Ways and Means
State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street, Room 211
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee:

SUBJECT: SB2915, SD1
Relating to Lifeguard Services at State Park Beaches
In Support

The Honolulu Emergency Services Department (HESD), which manages both the Ocean Safety and Emergency Medical Services programs for the City and County of Honolulu is in support of SB2915, SD1.

The island of Oahu has benefitted economically from continued visitor growth with preliminary arrivals of 6,193,027 visitors in 2019 which is an increase of 5.6% from 2018.

The economic benefits have also translated into an increased demand for public life safety services as visitors explore our island looking for unique and exciting experiences. Often times, visitors are unaware of the hazards associated with our beaches and ocean waters, which can result in tragic consequences.

HESD's Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division is tasked via the City Charter with being the primary responder to all emergencies that arise on the beaches and near-shore waters of Oahu. This includes 181 identified beaches and ocean related activities taking place in the waters and off-shore islands from the shoreline to one mile off-shore.

In order to meet this charter requirement, the Division provides two levels of ocean safety services. Lifeguard tower service which provides constant vigilance, preventive, emergency medical, and ocean rescue services. This service is provided at 41 locations, including a portion of Kaena Point State Park.

The remainder of the beaches and both State and County beach parks are serviced by mobile lifeguard services which provide limited vigilance and preventive services. Mobile service provides full scale emergency medical and ocean rescue services via patrol and "911" dispatch to emergencies.

The Honorable Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
And Members of the Committee on Ways and Means
February 20, 2020
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Mobile service has proved to be highly effective in serving the ocean safety needs of our community and has expanded from 13 to 17 units daily since 2015. This service is equipment intensive as the mobile service relies on vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, rescue skis and a rescue boat to ensure timely and effective lifesaving prevention, intervention and responses.

Both tower lifeguard service and mobile service are currently available from 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily with two exceptions; Hanauma Bay and a small portion of Waikiki Beach.

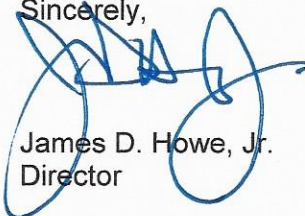
HESD is preparing to present to the City Council a program to extend lifeguard service hours from Dawn to Dusk to address drowning deaths that occur before and after current lifeguard service hours.

The use of T.A.T. funds for ocean safety equipment would directly benefit visitor safety for those who use our beaches and state waters.

As we all know, visitors to Hawaii come here to use our beaches and experience the wonders of our ocean waters.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this life safety measure.

Sincerely,

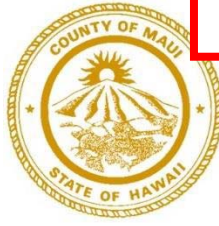


James D. Howe, Jr.
Director

MICHAEL P. VICTORINO
Mayor

DAVID C. THYNE
Fire Chief

BRADFORD K. VENTURA
Deputy Fire Chief



LATE



DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & PUBLIC SAFETY
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 DAIRY ROAD
KAHULUI, HI 96732

February 20, 2020

The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 208
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Dela Cruz,

Subject: Senate Bill (SB) 2915, Senate Draft (SD) 1, Relating to Lifeguard Services at State Park Beaches

I am David C. Thyne, Fire Chief of the Maui Fire Department (MFD). The MFD support SB 2915, SD 1, which proposes to allocate transient accommodations tax revenues to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) to cover lifeguard service expenses incurred at state park beaches and appropriate funds from the state park special fund for lifeguard services at state beach park.

MFD and DLNR have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide lifeguard services at Makena Beach Park. The total operating costs for Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 was \$1,103,285.86. The MOU grants \$1,056,058.64 which means the County of Maui is responsible for the balance of \$47,227.22.

The passage of SB 2915 would ensure the proper funds are allocated to cover all expenses at the various state beach parks including Makena Beach Park. The MFD strongly supports SB 2915.

Should you have questions, please contact my office at (808) 270-7561.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D.C. Thyne".

DAVID C. THYNE
Fire Chief

SB-2915-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2020 10:14:29 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/20/2020 10:35:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Present at Hearing |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Kyle Foyle | Individual | Support | No |

Comments:

February 18, 2020

In SUPPORT of HB 1698 HD1

BU 14 was created in 2013 which is composed of state law enforcement officers (LEOs) and Ocean Safety Officers/Lifeguards (OSO). The LEOs are armed officers who carry out law enforcement duties, serve warrants, make arrests, escort criminals and provide security for our state capital, airports and courthouses. The Hawaii Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement (DOCARE) is tasked with full state police powers to enforce all state laws with their primary jurisdiction involving State lands, State Parks, historical sites, forest reserves, aquatic life and wildlife areas, and coastal zones.

OSOs provide ocean safety lifeguarding services for about 500 miles of coastline across the whole state. OSOs services include ocean rescue prevention, ocean rescue, emergency medical first response, dispatched mobile patrol, education, and injury prevention programs related to ocean safety.

I strongly support HB 1698 which amends bargaining unit 14 to be composed of state law enforcement officers and creates a new bargaining unit 15 to be composed of lifeguards. The creation of BU 15 will allow the highly trained and skilled LEOs and OSOs the ability to focus on the unique nature of their jobs through separate negotiations.

Mahalo,
Kyle Foyle