

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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

Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS

By

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

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

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

Senate Bill 346 SD1 restricts the planting of large trees along evacuation routes and authorizes the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to identify large trees along evacuation routes and trim, spray, or remove large trees if the trees have the potential to obstruct the evacuation route. Defines evacuation route. Makes appropriations.

The concept of this proposal is a sound idea, but the implementation could result in duplicative and unnecessary services already provided for. Each respective county establishes the evacuation routes in coordination with HI-EMA. If this measure would go through, another agency would have to be tasked to monitor, coordinate, and implement these specific services.

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.

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SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/22/2019 1:33:13 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2019 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Katharine T. Cannon-Eger	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

After Hurricane Iselle and falling albezia trees trapped many Puna residents in their homes on the day of a primary election, I can certainly see the need for this effort.

At the same time, I hope present and designated landmark trees are protected.

Mahalo,

K.T. Cannon-Eger

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Testimony before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

Monday, February 25, 2019 10:30 A.M.
Conference Room 211

RE: SB346 SD1 RELATING TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means:

Trees for Honolulu's Future (TFHF) is a non-profit organization with a vision for a tree-filled 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 cannot support 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, of trees along evacuation routes. This work should be done by recognized, professionally certified, 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 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 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, Board of Directors
Trees for Honolulu's Future