



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

March 31, 2020

The Honorable David Ige
Governor, State of Hawaii
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Governor Ige:

As you are aware, the public is not following seriously the "social distancing" and the "shelter-in-place" rules and guidelines in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. The Senate Special Committee COVID-19 is very concerned. We believe more aggressive messaging to the public is needed. We thus request the Administration and the Department of Health put in place as soon as possible a public health alert network system to provide critical information and reminders about COVID-19.

South Korea officials found emergency texts sent three to five times a day were most effective in reducing community spread. The text messages detail exact locations and movements of people who have tested positive with COVID-19 as well as issue **regular reminders and instructions on how to prevent the disease from spreading**. Instructions on social distancing, hand washing, coughing etiquette, and how to care for seniors are included in the daily text. According to a CNN article ("How governments are using text alerts to fight the coronavirus pandemic"), South Korea's **text alert system helps in "flattening the curve"**. See attached.

Other text alert systems have been implemented by the County of San Diego and the County of Los Angeles. Los Angeles has established the Los Angeles Health Alert Network. This network provides their Department of Public Health to push emails and text alert priorities. See attached one example of the alert system, which appears to be similar to the disaster alerts currently used.

Public Safety Alerts are critical to remind both residents and visitors that in order to save lives, stay home. This includes reminding everyone that beaches, trails, recreation areas, and other public spaces are closed. Social distancing is one of the few tools currently available to fight the spread of the virus.

Lastly, the committee asks that the Governor, including the DOH and other appropriate members of the Administration, schedule a daily briefing to provide the public with information on COVID-19. This will help in assuring that the community is receiving the same information on a timely basis.

The committee requests a response on the strategy and timeline to establish this text alert system and the confirmation on scheduling a daily public briefing by **4:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 1.**

Please email your response to all Senate Special Committee COVID-19 members. Should you have any questions, please contact Dane Wicker at 586-6639 or via email at d.wicker@capitol.hawaii.gov.

Sincerely,

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Senator Michelle N. Kidani
Senator Donna Mercado Kim
Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Senator Kurt Fevella

Attachments

Cc. Senate President
All Senators