



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/04/2021

Time: 08:30 AM

Location: Via Videoconference

Committee: House Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Dr. Christina M. Kishimoto, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB 0574 RELATING TO DISASTER RELIEF.

Purpose of Bill: Shortens the time for reporting the purpose of any allotment or expenditure of fund moneys. Requires federal disaster relief funds to lapse to the general fund if not expended within five years. Repeals language authorizing the DOE to retain federal disaster relief funds. Repeals language requiring unspent funds to be rolled over. Requires annual reports to the legislature on federal disaster relief funds.

Department's Position:

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) respectfully submits comments on HB574 HD1 Proposed Draft.

This measure seeks to delete §37-41.5(c) and §127A-16(d), both of which allow the Department to retain federal disaster relief funds when federal disaster relief reimbursements are issued to the Department. These sections are intended to allow the Department to receive and retain federal disaster relief reimbursements for the expenditure made by the Department in instances when the appropriation from which the reimbursed expenditure were made has lapsed. Under current accounting practice, if the original appropriation has lapsed, the reimbursement will go to the State Treasury.

Under ideal conditions, all State expenditures for disaster relief would be made from State Department of Defense appropriations or other specific appropriation made for such purpose. In this situation, the Department would not be issued federal disaster relief reimbursements and these provisions would be unnecessary.

It is under less than ideal conditions, when the Department out of necessity expends

appropriations made for other purposes, such as lump sum Capital Improvement Program funds, to provide disaster relief. If this situation were to arise, and the Department were to undertake the considerable additional administrative workload required to maximize federal reimbursements, the Department would appreciate being able to retain and use those federal reimbursements for the original intended purpose.

The Department would welcome an opportunity to continue dialogue on improving reliability and predictability of financing disaster relief.

Thank you for the opportunity provide testimony on this measure.

The Hawai'i State Department of Education is committed to delivering on our promises to students, providing an equitable, excellent, and innovative learning environment in every school to engage and elevate our communities. This is achieved through targeted work around three impact strategies: school design, student voice, and teacher collaboration. Detailed information is available at www.hawaiipublicschools.org.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
3949 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96816-4495

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 574,
RELATING TO DISASTER RELIEF

Before the House Committee on
PANDEMIC AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS

By

Luke P. Meyers
Administrator, Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA)

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice-Chair Eli and Members of the Committee:

House Bill 574 shortens the time for reporting the purpose of any allotment or expenditure of fund moneys. Requires federal disaster relief funds to lapse to the general fund if not expended within five years. Repeals language authorizing the DOE to retain federal disaster relief funds. Repeals language requiring unspent funds to be rolled over. Requires annual reports to the legislature on federal disaster relief funds.

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency **opposes** House Bill 574.

During disasters, operations and related expenses take time to implement, formulate, and track. The recommended thirty-day timeframe for a report based on the allotment will be difficult to provide a clear and value-added summary. The original sixty-day language allows for more time to provide a complete assessment.

The change of the reimbursement funding being placed into a trust account creates challenges. The trust account for HI-EMA and the State is particularly important to show how the funds are being reimbursed for the State's grant management expenses. This is further complicated by the change of the funds lapsing after five years back to the general fund.

The striking of unspent funding under \$2,500,000 appears to be incorporated with the change identified above, but the intent of the original legislation was to have an emergency and/or disaster relief fund that could be used immediately after an incident. This is based on experience that not each incident will reach thresholds for various types of Federal Disaster Assistance.

The additional reporting requirements by the Administrator of Federal funds received during a disaster is unrealistic due to the uncertain lengths of different types of disasters as well as the myriad of sources from which Federal funds originate. HI-EMA does produce reports and summaries on a routine basis for Federal Funds as we work through the response, recovery, and mitigation functions. We are willing and committed to sharing these with the community and our stakeholders. HI-EMA currently is managing response, recovery, mitigation functions dating back to 2006 for over ten open disasters.

Thank you.

Luke P. Meyers: Luke.P.Meyers@hawaii.gov; 808-733-4300