
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU TO REMOVE THE OCEAN SAFETY AND LIFEGUARD SERVICES DIVISION FROM THE EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT AND ESTABLISH IT AS A NEW, SEPARATE DEPARTMENT.

1 WHEREAS, the Honolulu Emergency Services Department
2 currently consists of the Honolulu Emergency Medical Services
3 Division, Honolulu Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division,
4 Health Services Branch, and Community Outreach Response and
5 Engagement Branch; and

6
7 WHEREAS, the Honolulu Emergency Services Department is
8 responsible for the safety of the one million residents of Oahu
9 and approximately ten million annual visitors; and

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11 WHEREAS, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division
12 staffs forty-one towers around Oahu and conducts patrols with
13 trucks, jet skis, utility task vehicles, and all-terrain
14 vehicles to keep Oahu residents and visitors safe; and

15
16 WHEREAS, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division
17 partners with many first-responder organizations; and

18
19 WHEREAS, the Revised Charter of the City and County of
20 Honolulu designates the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services
21 Division as the primary responder for emergencies arising on the
22 beach and in the nearshore waters of the island of Oahu, which
23 features two hundred twenty-seven miles of coastline; and

24
25 WHEREAS, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division
26 is divided into five operational districts:

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28 (1) The South Shore (from the Pearl Harbor entrance to
29 Maunalua Bay);



- 1 (2) The Windward Coast (from Maunalua Bay to the Kailua
- 2 side of the Mokapu Peninsula);
- 3
- 4 (3) The North Shore (from the Kaneohe side of the Mokapu
- 5 Peninsula around Kahuku Point all the way to Kaena
- 6 Point);
- 7
- 8 (4) The Leeward Coast (from Kaena Point down to the Pearl
- 9 Harbor channel entrance); and
- 10
- 11 (5) Hanauma Bay; and
- 12

13 WHEREAS, each of the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services
 14 Division's five operational districts is staffed by a captain,
 15 three lieutenants, and between twenty-one to sixty ocean safety
 16 officers, or lifeguards; and

17
 18 WHEREAS, each operational district uses tower and mobile
 19 units to provide ocean safety service; and

20
 21 WHEREAS, with some minor exceptions, most mobile units are
 22 currently staffed from 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., and towers operate
 23 from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and

24
 25 WHEREAS, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division
 26 currently employs two hundred thirty-five full-time lifeguards
 27 and thirty-seven contract lifeguards, for a total force of two
 28 hundred seventy-two lifeguards, and has an annual operating
 29 budget of \$19,800,000; and

30
 31 WHEREAS, nearshore waters extend from the shoreline to one
 32 mile off shore, which is where the vast majority of ocean
 33 recreation activities occur; and

34
 35 WHEREAS, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division
 36 is challenged with maintaining service levels by an ever-
 37 increasing amount of ocean activity, particularly with the
 38 introduction of kayak rental operations, stand-up paddling
 39 activities, and surf instruction operations; and

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 41 WHEREAS, with the amount of responsibility that it bears
 42 and the scope of its duties, the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard



1 Services Division warrants becoming a separate department within
2 the City and County of Honolulu; now, therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
5 Thirty-second Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
6 Session of 2023, that the City and County of Honolulu is urged
7 to remove the Ocean Safety and Lifeguard Services Division from
8 the Emergency Services Department and establish it as a new,
9 separate department; and

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Mayor of the City and
12 County of Honolulu and Honolulu City Council are urged to work
13 together to establish the new department pursuant to section 4-
14 202 of the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu;
15 and

16

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
18 Resolution be transmitted to the Mayor of the City and County of
19 Honolulu, Chairperson of the Honolulu City Council, and Director
20 of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department.

