



WAIKIKI NEIGHBORHOOD BOARD NO. 9

10 NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION • 925 DILLINGHAM BLVD. SUITE 160 • HONOLULU, HAWAII, 96817
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Date: March 14, 2023

At the February 14, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Waikiki Neighborhood Board the board supported the concept of Senate Bill 346.

All Waikiki Residents are aware of the noise a Honolulu Fire Department (HFD) Truck makes when responding to an emergency. While the numbers of actual Fires and Ocean Rescues is relatively low the Waikiki Fire Station responds to about 200 Medical Emergency Calls in the radius of the Station each Month.

Currently the City and County of Honolulu has Ordinances and Policy that requires the Firefighter driving an Emergency Vehicle to use the Siren and Horn when responding to an Emergency.

Residents are concerned that during the early morning hours, normally 2-4 AM, that the sirens only disturb sleep and are not necessary for Safety when the HFD vehicles respond to an Emergency.

Senate Bill 346 would make the use of Sirens/Horns optional for the Firefighter Driving the Vehicle.

If enacted this Bill would allow the Fire Chief, Mayor, City Council, Corporation Council and the Firefighters Union to deliberate if it could be implemented in the City and County of Honolulu.

Mahalo for your concern,

Robert Finley

Robert Finley
Chair

SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 2:02:59 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Jacob	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair and Committee Members:

The Waikīkī Neighborhood Board is in strong support of Senate Bill 346, and its companion House Bill 175, both titled “Relating to Emergency Vehicles.” These acts clarify that the use of sirens by emergency vehicles shall not be necessary if it is not reasonable under the circumstances.

Waikīkī has been subjected to an unprecedented amount of noise pollution. Noise pollution has been documented to have ranging negative impacts on both human and animal life. One common and frequent source of noise pollution in Waikīkī is the use of emergency sirens at all hours through the day and night. Although emergency sirens can be necessary, recent studies suggest that the use has minimal positive effect, and use can cause further accidents and injury. *See* Joint Statement of Lights & Siren Vehicle Operations on Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Responses, dated February 14, 2022. The Waikīkī Neighborhood Board also understands that every 911 emergency call results in both a fire truck and an ambulance being dispatched to the scene, and that a majority of these calls regard non-life threatening emergencies.

The Waikīkī Neighborhood Board appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony. We encourage the passage of this minimal effort to address the severity of noise pollution within Waikīkī.

SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 8:14:47 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Curtis Miller	Liliuokalani Gardens AOAO	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Resolution for Reducing Siren Noise in Waikiki

Submitted by Curtis Miller, VP Liliuokalani Gardens AOAO

Whereas sirens do NOT significantly increase the timely delivery of patients to hospitals; (1)

Whereas sirens do NOT significantly increase the timely arrival of fire personnel to accident sites; (1)

Whereas civilian safety is NOT enhanced by siren use; (2)

Whereas ambulance use of sirens is associated with increased risk of ambulance crashes. (3,5)

Whereas many motorists cannot hear sirens due to driving habits; (4)

Whereas limiting use of sirens will DECREASE risk of injury and death; (6)

Whereas siren use has LITTLE bearing on patient outcomes; (2)(7)

Whereas traffic in Waikiki is significantly reduced between the hours of 10 pm and 5 am;

Whereas fire and EMT sirens are a daily occurrence that create significant disturbances;

Whereas such disturbances greatly affect the peace and sleep patterns of residents in Waikiki;

Resolved, that the Waikiki Community Council urges the Honolulu Fire Department to eliminate

the deployment of sirens between the hours of 10 pm and 5 am.

Further, the Waikiki Community Council urges the Honolulu Fire Department to re-examine its coding policy in order to reduce the number of code three extreme emergency dispatches during

all hours, day and night.

(1) Clawson, International Academies of Emergency

Dispatch <https://bdnews24.com/health/sirens-loud-ineffective-and-risky-experts-say>

(2) Kupas, etal, National Association of State EMS

Directors <https://naemsp.org/NAEMSP/media/NAEMSP->

Documents/Annual%20Meeting/2021%20MDC%20Handouts/Joint-Statement-on-Red-Light-and-Siren-Operations-with-Logos-FINAL-(003).pdf

(3) Watanabe, etal, Annals of Emergency Medicine <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30648537/>

(4) Monmouth Ocean Hospital Service

Corporation <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ivHTkZa7z0E>(5) Saunders, Prehosp Disaster

Medicine [https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/prehospital-and-disaster-](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/prehospital-and-disaster-medicine/article/abs/ambulance-collisions-in-an-urban-environment/F66595C98F8D38E43FD08A54530E12EC)

medicine/article/abs/ambulance-collisions-in-an-urban-environment/F66595C98F8D38E43FD08A54530E12EC

(6) Marques-Baptista, Prehosp Emergency Care,

2016 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/20845321/>

(7) American College of Emergency Physicians [https://www.acepnow.com/article/ambulance-](https://www.acepnow.com/article/ambulance-lights-and-sirens-should-only-be-used-when-the-benefit-outweighs-the-risks/?singlepage=1&theme=print-friendly)

lights-and-sirens-should-only-be-used-when-the-benefit-outweighs-the-risks/?singlepage=1&theme=print-friendly

SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 12:09:45 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jay Henderson	Citizens Against Noise	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My organization, Citizens Against Noise, supports SB346 because this bill makes the use of sirens discretionary. Although research has shown that sirens are often counterproductive, we agree that they can be an important safety device and people should pay attention to them. But using them when they are not absolutely necessary causes people to fail to distinguish when they're REALLY REALLY needed and when they're not, such as at nighttime when there is little or no traffic and everyone, including children who need their rest, are asleep. The result is the sirens fail to have their desired effect and result in nothing but noise. The indiscriminate use of sirens is a blight on the public's right to peace and quiet. SB346 addresses this by leaving it up to the ambulance or police car driver to decide whether the siren is needed or not and at what volume. Citizens Against Noise asks you to vote for this important bill. Thank you.



STATE OF HAWAII ORGANIZATION OF POLICE OFFICERS
" A Police Organization for Police Officers Only "
Founded 1971

March 14, 2023

VIA ONLINE

The Honorable Della Au Belatti
Chair
The Honorable Jenna Takenouchi
Vice-Chair
House Committee on Health & Homelessness
Hawaii State Capitol, Rooms 420, 333
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: **SB 346 SD1 – Relating to the Emergency Vehicles**

Dear Chair Au Belatti, Vice-Chair Takenouchi, and Honorable Committee members:

I serve as the President of the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers (“SHOPO”) and write to you on behalf of our Union in **strong support** of SB 346 SD1. This bill amends HRS § 291C-26(c) to make the use of emergency sirens by authorized emergency vehicles discretionary.

As noted in the measure, the use of sirens by emergency vehicles can be and is necessary to alert other vehicles and pedestrians that an emergency vehicle is exercising its authority to disregard certain traffic laws. However, use of the sirens is not always necessary or mandatory. The unnecessary use of a siren contributes to noise pollution, especially in heavily-congested residential areas. Further, providing emergency responders like police officers with the discretion to use their sirens will alleviate noise pollution, the unnecessary disturbance of our citizens who are sleeping at night when the streets are empty of cars and pedestrians, as well as curb unnecessary traffic situations and panic. This Act will provide much needed flexibility in the use of sirens by emergency response vehicles in certain circumstances.

We thank you for allowing us to be heard on this very important issue and hope your committee will unanimously support this bill and allow this bill to take effect upon its approval.

Respectfully submitted,

ROBERT “BOBBY” CAVACO
SHOPO President

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SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/14/2023 2:29:31 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I must be dreaming. Relief may be in sight, after years of complaints from human beings about being awakened at all hours by fire sirens, ambulance sirens, police sirens when there is no traffic and no pedestrians in sight. Studies show that our health is disrupted and adversely affected by noise. Studies show we need uninterrupted sleep, at least seven hours, not sleep broken by sirens. Please support this bill.

I live on the edge of Chinatown where the noise is horrendous. Late at night it travels for blocks. I hear the sirens and can see them going up and down the freeway which is blocks away.

SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 9:51:57 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Denise Boisvert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support discretionary use when it comes to sirens by authorized emergency vehicles.

Over the many years that I've lived on my small one-way, one-lane street in Waikiki I have heard and watched emergency vehicles pass my building with sirens going full blast with NO other vehicles in front or behind them.

Despite no other vehicles being on the street, thousands of people in the buildings lining the street are forced to hear the sirens, and at full volume.

Sirens are needed in many situations, but NOT ALL, so that is why I support this bill.

SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 9:57:20 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Jorgensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing in FULL SUPPORT of this bill. Noise is a known detriment to health and well-being. Some noise is necessary, but when circumstances deem it is not, then laws should be changed for the betterment of those affected by unnecessary noise. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 10:08:03 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Mischer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a resident in a condominium on AlaWai Blvd. and Seaside, I very much support the discretionary use of sirens, especially during nighttime. The safety of first responders is obviously most important. However giving those first responders the choice to use their sirens or not, will reduce the noise pollution in Waikiki. Please vote yes, for many better nights of sleep to come. Thank you.

SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 11:18:47 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Roland Nipps	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I live in Waikiki. I am a grade school teacher. I get up and go to sleep early. The sirens coming down Kuhio Ave. sounds as if we were at war. Sleeping undisturbed rarely happens. I'd love for them to tone down their sirens. I support bill SB 346. Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 2:28:26 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Margaret Murchie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Anything that we can do to cut down on the earsplitting noise of sirens, motorized vehicles, amplified music from street performers with painfully loud noise is a good thing. It is getting out of hand and support this bill.

SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2023 8:47:20 PM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pam Walker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB346. Living in a 16th floor condominium in Waikiki, overlooking Kuhio Avenue, can be very noisy at night when emergency vehicles are passing. I can look directly down on Kuhio, and have a clear view both directions for many blocks. It is upsetting to have my sleep disturbed by the sirens, when there are no vehicles on the road. The sirens echo off of the buildings, and can be heard for blocks away. Having the sirens silenced, when it is safe for the vehicles to proceed, would make it possible to enjoy a good nights sleep.

SB-346-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/16/2023 6:10:21 AM

Testimony for HLT on 3/17/2023 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of SD1. Thank you.