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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
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STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1835 HD1,
RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 26, 2024

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to **SUPPORT** HB1835 HD1.

Prioritizing an efficient and transparent distribution management system is a critical aspect of HI-EMA's operations during emergency situations. HI-EMA supports the establishment of this advisory board as an effective means of bringing administrators of state and local agencies together to develop and advise on HI-EMA's statewide distribution management plan.

HI-EMA eagerly anticipates collaborating with the individuals comprising this advisory board, as they will serve as representatives of crucial frontline divisions within their respective organizations. These individuals will be responsible for efficiently allocating resources during times of crisis. A management board is crucial to HI-EMA for several reasons but not limited to the following:

- They will all provide a platform for strategic decision-making by experienced individuals
- Members will bring their expertise and diverse perspectives
- Governance and accountability – ensuring the Agency operates within legal and regulatory frameworks
- Stakeholders represent various entities – ensuring decisions and actions align with the interests and needs of respective stakeholders

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 1835 HD1.

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**The State Legislature
The House Committee on Finance
Monday, February 26, 2024
Room 306, 10:00 a.m.**

To: Representative Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
From: Keali'i S. Lopez, State Director, AARP Hawai'i
Re: Support for H.B. 1835 HD1 - Relating to Distribution Management

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Keali'i Lopez, and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals aged 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and over 140,000 in Hawai'i. We advocate for the issues that matter to Hawai'i families including financial security, access to affordable, quality health care for all generations; and serves as a reliable information source on issues critical to people over the age of fifty.

AARP Hawai'i supports H.B 1835 HD1 which establishes a Distribution Management Advisory Board to develop and advise on the statewide distribution management plan. **We suggest an amendment to the bill to include a consumer stakeholder representative to be appointed by the governor who could be a representative from disaster resilient communities or older and disabled residents who would be especially vulnerable in a disaster and its aftermath.**

One of the keys to setting up immediate post-disaster distribution management is to encourage the efforts of communities to become disaster resilient. Disaster resilient communities recognized by state and county emergency management agencies have started discussing and planning to identify and help kupuna in their neighborhoods and for surviving the aftermath of a disaster as distribution networks are re-established. This kind of grassroots, community planning should be recognized, encouraged and incorporated into the state's Distribution Management Plan.

Disaster resilient communities can help with the "last mile" – the final step between getting post-disaster supplies to an area and into the hands of the people who need them and so should have a say in how the plan is developed and how we can encourage other



communities to start thinking about how they would provide for themselves and their neighbors in the aftermath of a disaster.

Effective mitigation planning requires that we consider the needs of all populations and having a representative of stakeholders who need post-disaster aid on the advisory board will ensure their perspectives are considered in the formation of post-disaster plans.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **H.B 1835, HD1.**