



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2454, HD1
MAKING AN EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH.**

SEN. JOY SAN BUENAVENTURA, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Hearing Date: March 15, 2024

Room Number: 225

1 **Fiscal Implications:** \$1,500,000 general fund appropriation.

2 **Department Testimony:** The Department of Health (DOH) main office at Kinau Hale in
3 downtown Honolulu (1250 Punchbowl Street) is in a dilapidated condition that contributes to
4 increasingly frequent disturbances of asbestos in the ceiling and floor of the building since
5 November 2023. Although multiple ambient air testing confirms that the air in the building is
6 currently safe, a major incident such as heavy rains causing massive roof leaks may significantly
7 elevate risk.

8 The Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) conducted a walk-through of the
9 building in mid-January and has identified certain necessary minor safety repairs, including
10 encapsulating the existing ceiling in several locations and addressing leaks and faulty drainlines.
11 DOH has agreed to fund and move forward with DAGS getting these repairs to bid at an
12 estimated cost in excess of \$500,000.

13 In the meantime, DOH has taken action by:

- 14 • Conducting ambient air quality testing in December 2023 and repeating testing every
15 three months going forward;
- 16 • Permitting staff in certain areas to voluntarily and temporarily relocate to other DOH
17 facilities to the extent operationally possible;

- 1 • Procuring 61 air purifiers with HEPA filters which have been placed throughout the
2 building; and
- 3 • Cooperating with and implementing recommendations from the Hawaii Occupational
4 Safety & Health Office, who conducted an investigation of the second floor of Kinau
5 Hale on December 6, 2023 and closed the case with no further action on February 8,
6 2024.

7 Funds are being sought in this EA for the above-mentioned repairs, continued air-quality
8 testing, and for moving and lease expense in the event that DOH must significantly relocate
9 staff and equipment due to asbestos disturbance or other catastrophic building failure
10 requiring immediate evacuation and significant remediation. To the extent possible, funds
11 are also requested to begin preliminary planning for redevelopment of the parcel on which
12 Kinau Hale is built and to take any other mitigative steps to keep Kinau Hale safe for
13 employees and the public during the interim period.

14 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.