

TESTIMONY OF
LARRY S VERAY

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2015

RELATED TO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

February 6, 2024

Aloha, Chair Todd, Vice Chair Kila and Committee members. I am Larry Veray, Chairman for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21. I am submitting this testimony representing our board as a whole and the over 6,000 residents and families that live in Pacific Palisades in Pearl City. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB2015, that would require the Department of Transportation to build an emergency egress road that could potentially save thousands of lives if a disaster occurred in Pacific Palisades allowing for evacuation of residents and access for emergency response vehicles.

Pacific Palisades is extremely vulnerable to a natural disaster such as hurricane high winds and flash flooding. With lessons learned from the Lahaina fires, a fast-moving wild fire could destroy the entire Palisades community. The community is built on a plateau above the main portion of Pearl City and the only access road to the area is Komo Mai Drive is a one lane, winding steep road, with a hairpin turn at the base of Palisades. There are two major vulnerabilities for the residents of Palisades: (1) a stream that runs under Komo Mai Rd at the lower elevation of the road subject to possibly a flash flooding taking out the road and (2) many of the homes are built on the peripheral are unable to build fire breaks because their property is right to the edge of those peripheral residential properties.

As my Vice Chair Charmaine Doran stated in her testimony, over the past two decades, the residents of Palisades have been held captive to water main breaks, tree fallings, two actual hostage crises events, road flooding, traffic accidents, police shootings/investigations and much more requiring closing Komo Mai Drive the only access road to Palisades. These events have impacted thousands of residents who were unable to return home or even leave their neighborhood, waiting for hours to receive the all clear for the road to open to residents.

I most strongly urge you to pass HB2015. The residents in Pacific Palisades desperately require this emergency egress route to be built and thank you for the language in this bill. Mahalo!

Larry S. Veray

HB-2015

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 9:32:22 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chris Prendergast	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

An alternate route in and out of Pacific Palisades has been a subject of discussion for decades. This was brought to the attention of the Dept Of Transportation about 20 years ago when I was president of the Pacific Palisades Community Association. We were told it would cost each Homeowner at least \$1 million each. We have had our share of blocked access due to hostage situations, Where flooding, rock slides I would like to bring this topic again to the forefront. A route behind the Leeward Christian church, and children's house seems to be the most viable, But other routes should also be explored, such as across the Valley to Waipio. Please budget for this project.

HB-2015

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 9:44:38 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leigh Ann Vasconcellos	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in favor and support HB2015.

Thank you,

Leigh

HB-2015

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:01:45 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kuuleipulama Dyer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

To whom it may concern:

I am a resident living in Pearl City Palisades and would like in support of

bill SB2015...

HB-2015

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:02:56 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Baron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a first responder, the ability to egress from Pacific Palisades or to report for duty outside of Pacific Palisades is significantly hampered when the only entry/exit to/from Pacific Palisades is blocked.

An additional/alternative route out would benefit the quick evacuation of the community in the case of an emergency. The additional route would also allow community members to get to where they need to be (work, family gatherings, family responsibilities, etc.) in the event that the one route in and out Pacific Palisades is blocked.

HB-2015

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:25:48 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julie Reyes Oda	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Vote YES on HB2015.

HB-2015

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:57:27 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kevin Kacatin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Speaking as a resident of Pacific Palisades, this is worth exploring and investing it due to the sheer size of the population there and vulnerability of the geography.

February 6, 2024

Thank you for considering this measure. A big mahalo to our Pearl City state representatives and senators for advocating on behalf of the Pacific Palisades community.

Over the last two decades, the residents of Pacific Palisades have been held captive to water main breaks, tree fallings, two actual hostage crises, road flooding, traffic accidents, police shootings/investigations and much more. When these types of events happen, 6,000+ residents are unable to return home or even leave the neighborhood. In the past, when residents inquired about an alternate route or emergency access point, we have been told that it would be on us to pay for the road ourselves. While money is a surefire way for the government to put the brakes on almost any requests, with this - it is wrong, and it is irresponsible.

Palisades is a resilient and undemanding community. We have a vibrant elementary school located across our only emergency siren. A siren that has been broken for years. We border the state Ewa Forest reserve - which lacks adequate firebreaks. Despite having no parking, security, or even waste removal services, in the forest, we regularly host residents, tourists, tours, the military, hunters, and campers. Palisades residents routinely clean up after many of these visitors. There are also numerous emergency rescues each year due to those lost or injured in the forest. Yet, the requests from the Palisades community are far and few.

The Lahaina fires have sparked a new and heightened awareness about emergency procedures. Today, we better understand the role of government in protecting citizens during an emergency and how that starts **before** a disaster. It starts with adequate emergency planning and funding. On behalf of my neighbors and the many people that visit Pacific Palisades daily – we ask for your attention to this matter and the adoption of this bill.



Charmaine T. Doran
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HB-2015

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 2:52:06 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel C. Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill. It is important to identify possible alternative evacuation/exit routes in case of fire, flooding on Komo Mai or human disturbances.

HB-2015

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 4:40:36 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shawne Schmidt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of an emergency exit for Pacific Palisades in Pearl City. There is only one way out and one way in. It could save lives. MAHALO

HB-2015

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 6:09:02 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill