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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

February 23, 2024
11:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

H.B. 2270, H.D. 1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

House Committee on Finance

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) provides **supports the intent** of this bill which seeks to establish a task force to develop and explore alternate routes into and out of the Waianae Coast, including through Kolekole Pass and opening Waianae Coast emergency access road, and provides the following comments.

The HDOT is already working to provide alternate access in and out of the Waianae Coast area through the use of existing State and City facilities. The HDOT is working with the Honolulu Fire Department and the City's Department of Emergency Management on wildfire mitigation and emergency access routes in Waianae and is adding an additional lane on Farrington Highway, between Helelua Street and Mohihi Street.

The HDOT is also collaborating with the Army and Navy on the feasibility of utilizing the road through Kolekole Pass to allow for emergency access. For these reasons, we believe that this bill is not needed at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KENNETH S. HARA
DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY
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JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR OF
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STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
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KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
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HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4420

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

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2270 HD1
RELATING TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 23, 2024

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to **COMMENT** on HB 2270 HD1.

We support the intent of House Bill 2270 HD1 which seeks to establish partnerships between state and county entities with the aim of creating a readily accessible route that effectively serves the needs of the community during times of crisis. The importance of having alternative routes for emergency purposes cannot be overstated, particularly in areas like Wai'anae that are prone to natural disasters and other emergencies. Wai'anae's limited access routes can present significant challenges during such situations.

Supporting legislation that provides an alternative egress route out of the Wai'anae Coast for emergency purposes offers several potential benefits. These include improvements in emergency response, enhancement of public safety, bolstering economic resilience, and instilling greater confidence within the community.

Constructing new infrastructure to establish alternate routes requires careful consideration of factors such as feasibility, cost, and environmental impact. The priority should focus on the purpose of occasional use for emergencies, which could alleviate some of the aforementioned factors. It is also vital to engage local communities, stakeholders, and experts in the planning and decision-making process to ensure a comprehensive understanding of all perspectives and address potential concerns. We have been in communication with the State of Hawai'i,

Department of Transportation (SDOT) and understand that they are currently actively communicating with other state and federal agencies such as the Navy and Army.

This bill would help the Waiʻanae Coast community in developing an alternative plan that meets the objectives outlined in this legislation. However, we defer to the SDOT for operational impact and need to establish a task force.

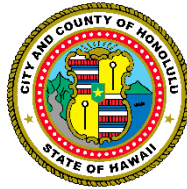
Thank you for the opportunity to provide **comments** to HB2270 HD1.

James Barros: james.barros@hawaii.gov; 808-733-4300

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February 22, 2024

The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice-Chair
and Members of the Committee on Finance
House of Representatives
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street, Room 308
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Committee on Finance:

SUBJECT: Support the Intent of House Bill 2270 HD1 Relating to the Department of Transportation

I am Hirokazu Toiya, director of the Department of Emergency Management (DEM), City and County of Honolulu. DEM **SUPPORTS the INTENT** House Bill 2270.

HB 2270 seeks to establish a task force to develop and explore alternative routes into and out of the Waianae coast, including through Kolekole Pass and opening Waianae Coast emergency access road. DEM provides the following comments.

DEM is already collaborating with our State, City, and Federal partners to evaluate and to the extent possible provide alternate access in and out of the Waianae Coast area. Specifically, DEM continues to work with the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), the Department of Transportation Services (DTS), Department of Facilities Maintenance (DFM), and the State Department of Transportation (HDOT) on the maintenance and use of the existing Waianae Coast Emergency Access Route as well as the potential expansion of its use. DEM along with the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency (HI-EMA) has existing agreements with the United States Army and United States Navy on the use of Kolekole Pass as an emergency access route. We will continue to work with our partners to evaluate feasibility of any expanded use or additional alternative options for emergency access for the people of the Waianae coast.

Given this ongoing collaboration and the fact that the legislation would establish a task force within HDOT, DEM supports the intent of HB 2270 HD1 and defers to HDOT as to the need and benefits of establishing such a task force. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Hirokazu Toiya
Director



**SUPPORTS THE INTENT OF HB 2270, HD1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

House Committee on Finance
The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

Friday, February 23, 2024
11:30 a.m.; Agenda #2
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference
Hawaii State Capitol; 415 South Beretania Street

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

The Hawaii Military Affairs Council ("MAC") supports the intent of HB 2270, HD1 which establishes a task force to develop and explore alternate routes into and out of the Waianae Coast, including through Kolekole pass and opening Waianae Coast emergency access road.

The MAC was established in 1985 when the Chamber was appointed by the State to serve as the liaison to the military. The MAC advocates on behalf of Hawaii's military, and is comprised of business leaders, academic institutions, State and County officials, members of the CODEL, community leaders, labor unions and organizations and retired U.S. flag and general officers. The MAC works to support Hawaii's location as a strategic U.S. headquarters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region which is crucial for U.S. national and homeland security.

The United States military is acutely aware of the challenges faced by the residents of Oahu's westside, particularly the limited access to roads and the current state of disrepair of the Kolekole Pass. We understand the critical role this pass plays as an emergency evacuation route and the potential it holds for easing traffic congestion in the area.

The MAC is dedicated to working collaboratively with our military partners, the local community, and the state to find a viable solution that addresses these concerns.

We believe that a similar approach from the Waianae Coast emergency access road system can be applied to the Kolekole Pass. By leveraging our collective resources, expertise, and commitment to public safety, we are confident that we can bring a similar solution.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I stand in strong support of this bill. I've been a lifelong resident of the Waianae Coast and have borne witness to numerous events and daily traffic that has crippled the west side. I've also been fortunate enough that my father was able to have base access and use Kolekole pass when it was still open. While making Kolekole pass available to the public would be the quickest way to have an alternate road into and out of Waianae, it will likely receive the most pushback, almost exclusively from the Military. Other options should also be considered such as building a new road.

The picture shown is an alternate road I have been proposing for some time now. It is a rough estimate of a route that would connect Lualualei Naval Road and Kualakai Parkway. The line in yellow would be the rough location of the main road, the red would be a connection to Nanakuli Avenue. This would of course likely require tunneling through the mountains as well as construction on steep grades and a revamp of the intersection of Farrington Highway and Lualualei Naval Road for an increase in traffic.

