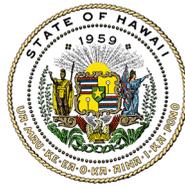


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



STEPHEN F. LOGAN
MAJOR GENERAL
ADJUTANT GENERAL
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR OF
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
KAHU HO'OMALU PŪLIA

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY
4204 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4420

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

TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 1379 SD1,
RELATING TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS
ADMINISTRATOR
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 28, 2025

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to **SUPPORT** Senate Bill 1379 SD1.

We strongly support the legislation to create Community Readiness Centers, which the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency's Hawai'i Hazards Awareness and Resilience Program (HHARP) is helping to implement. As natural disasters become more frequent, it's critical to have centralized locations where our communities have the capability to access essential support during and post disasters or emergencies.

HIEMA is currently engaging with community members to incorporate a comprehensive training program and implement educational workshops at these centers, which will enhance community resilience by equipping individuals with the knowledge and skill set necessary to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies effectively.

These Community Readiness Centers will foster collaboration among local agencies, improving the response efforts and resource management in each community. The centers will have the ability to store emergency communications equipment, the capability to provide back-up power, store food and water – so that communities can re-establish themselves in the aftermath of any disaster.

Again, this undertaking is a testament to our government's commitment to supporting its people. This measure offers an excellent opportunity to enhance our emergency preparedness and response capabilities, which helps to elevate our overall emergency enterprise.

I encourage you to advocate for this initiative, as investing in the long-term resiliency of our state means prioritizing in the safety and welfare of our kama'āina. This legislative bill will help us build much stronger and more resilient communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on Senate Bill 1379 SD1.

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



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 1379, SD1: RELATING TO EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

TO: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Tina Andrade, President and CEO, Catholic Charities Hawaii

Hearing: **Friday, 2/28/25; 10:35 AM;** CR 211 & Videoconference

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members, Committee on Ways and Means:

Catholic Charities Hawaii **strongly supports SB 1379, SD1**, which establishes the Community Readiness Centers Program and a Special Fund to fund this program to enhance Hawaii's resilience to disasters and emergencies.

Catholic Charities Hawaii (CCH) is a tax exempt, community-based organization that has been providing social services in Hawaii for over 77 years. CCH has programs serving elders, veterans, children, families, homeless and immigrants. Our mission is to provide services and advocacy to the most vulnerable in Hawaii. We assist over 40,000 people annually across the state.

The local residents served by Catholic Charities Hawaii are struggling to survive with our high cost of living. They are especially vulnerable to any disasters or emergencies and have few extra resources to cope with any emergency. As an island state we have seen the high impact of wildfires, hurricanes, flooding, etc. Our isolation in the middle of the Pacific Ocean makes it increasingly important for us to move towards a higher level of preparedness.

As a partner in Climate Hawaii (an initiative of the Hawaii Executive Collaborative), we see the need to develop effective disaster preparedness efforts at the local level.

We support the Community Readiness Centers to help ensure that the basic human needs of our local communities can be met during a disaster. Preparedness must start before a disaster happens. The Centers would work with local communities and provide emergency training, stockpiles of critical supplies and essential infrastructure to support medical needs and communications during blackouts. They would help communities to increase their readiness and resilience when disasters occur. This would help to reduce post-disaster costs, and save lives and resources in an emergency.

We are on the front lines of service delivery for elders, veterans, children, families, homeless, immigrants and the ALICE population. We ask for your support to ensure that our communities are ready to face the growing climate challenges.

If you have any questions, please contact our Legislative Liaison, Betty Lou Larson at (808) 527-4813.



CLARENCE T. C. CHING CAMPUS • 1822 Ke'eaumoku Street, Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone (808) 527-4813 •



SB-1379-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 11:40:40 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2025 10:35:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Raelene Tenno	Testifying for Hawaii Council of Community Associations	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

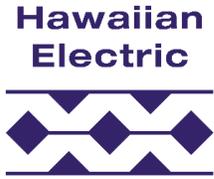
Support SB1379

Hawaii Council of Community Associations supports SB1379 and all efforts for emergency preparedness, readiness and aftermath.

The recent Lahaina fire and the 2017 Marco Polo fire are catastrophic emergencies that we can all learn from and protect the lives of all in Hawaii.

Thank you for allowing the submission of this testimony.

Raelene Tenno, Education Chair for Hawaii Council of Community Associations and Condo Owner since 1990.



CATHOLIC CHARITIES HAWAII



SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

February 28, 2025, 10:35 a.m., Room 211

Testimony in strong support of SB 1379 SD1

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Ways & Means Committee:

As partners of Climate Hawaii, an initiative of the Hawaii Executive Collaborative (HEC), we strongly support SB 1379, which establishes the Community Readiness Centers Program to enhance Hawaii's resilience to disasters and emergencies. As climate change increases the frequency and severity of hurricanes, wildfires, and other natural disasters, these centers will serve as lifeboats for preparedness, response, and recovery in vulnerable communities across the state.

Why Community Readiness Centers Are Essential for Hawai'i

Hawai'i's unique geographic isolation makes community-based resilience essential in responding to climate-driven disasters. We must prepare before disaster strikes to ensure residents have access to emergency supplies, power, medical aid, and critical communications. This is particularly true for greater risk for vulnerable populations, including kūpuna and those with medical needs. Further, given the increasing uncertainty with federal disaster aid, local resilience solutions are critical.

Community Readiness Centers are a proven, proactive strategy that:

- *Improve Emergency Response*: Readiness centers store food, water, medical supplies, and emergency equipment, ensuring communities can sustain themselves until broader relief arrives.
- *Provide Essential Infrastructure*: Equipped with solar panels and battery storage, these centers provide reliable power for medical needs, phone charging, and emergency communication during blackouts.
- *Strengthen Local Capacity*: Training programs and partnerships with community-based organizations empower residents with skills for disaster preparedness and recovery.
- *Reduce Post-Disaster Costs*: Every dollar invested in disaster resilience saves many more in emergency response and rebuilding costs, not to mention saving lives.

A Community-Driven Approach to Resilience

The most effective disaster preparedness efforts start at the local level. We urge the Legislature to ensure that readiness centers / resilience hubs:

- Leverage existing community networks by partnering with trusted local organizations engaged in resilience efforts.
- Prioritize retrofitting existing community facilities to maximize cost-effectiveness.
- Provide training, technical assistance, and ongoing community engagement to ensure readiness centers are fully integrated into emergency response plans.

A Smart, Scalable Solution for Hawai'i

Senate Bill 1379 provides a practical, forward-thinking framework to prepare our communities for climate-related disasters while reducing future costs and strengthening local resilience. As partners of Climate Hawai'i, we strongly urge the Legislature to pass this measure to ensure Hawai'i is ready to face the growing climate challenges ahead.

Mahalo for your leadership and the opportunity to testify.

About the Hawai'i Executive Collaborative

The Hawai'i Executive Collaborative (HEC) is a nonprofit organization that serves as a convener and provides backbone support to leaders from different sectors who want to help build a more resilient economy and state. HEC members believe in the power of acting collectively and focus their energies and resources on areas where immediate and systemic changes will benefit Hawai'i

and the world. For more information on Climate Hawai'i's real-world, high-impact solutions, please visit climatehawaii.earth.

Climate Hawai'i partners supporting this testimony:

- Hawaiian Electric
- Zephyr
- aio
- Sun Noodle
- County of Kaua'i
- Hua Nani Partners
- Chaminade University
- Manoa Valley Theatre
- Young Brothers
- Blue Planet Foundation
- Bowers + Kubota
- HEI
- Catholic Charities Hawaii
- Elemental Impact
- AES Hawai'i

SB-1379-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/26/2025 7:25:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/28/2025 10:35:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

Several disasters over the previous years have repeatedly tested and strained the emergency preparedness of Hawaii. From volcanic eruptions to fires, floods, and pandemics, we've faced the gamut of disasters. Enhancing our resiliency is not an option, it's a necessity. I believe this bill gets us closer to enhancing our resiliency for future threats.

I strongly urge this Committee to SUPPORT this bill!