



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## Legislative Testimony

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Testimony Presented Before the  
House Committee on Higher Education  
Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 2:01 p.m.

By

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### HB 571 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Woodson, Vice Chair Hashem, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) supports the intent of HB 571 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget.

In 1982, Hurricane 'Iwa caused \$320 million in damages on Kaua'i and in 1992, the damage caused by Hurricane Iniki was \$1.8 billion with 7,000 homes damaged or destroyed. A 2010 FEMA Risk Assessment indicates a similar Iniki strike on O'ahu could be 8 times more damaging. Many Hawai'i residents are not prepared for these impacts as indicated by: (i) rushing to the stores for food and water where there is a threatening event; (ii) returning these supplies after the event; (iii) complaining and being unable to cope with short-term power outages; and (iv) failing to differentiate between tsunami and hurricane evacuation planning. With a record number of hurricane warning and misses in 2014, 2015, and 2016, the State has been very fortunate, but must take much stronger action to educate the public on emergency management and disaster preparedness.

HB 571 provides funding support to enable the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to: (i) develop a formal Communication Plan and Outreach Strategy that will cover natural hazard risk and preparation, (ii) update and reprint the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards, and (iii) conduct a Statewide Systematic and Targeted Education and Outreach Initiative that follows: the Communication Plan and Outreach Strategy, utilizes the updated Homeowner's Handbook, as well as other communication products and tools such as videos, workshops, and seminars.

The University of Hawai'i through Hawai'i Sea Grant is well positioned to carry this out and has demonstrated success through its Homeowner's Handbook publication (see website link below). In 2007, Hawai'i Sea Grant produced the *Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards* publication that provides useful tips regarding readiness for natural hazards that may affect Hawai'i, including tsunami and hurricanes. The

handbook lists local civil defense and emergency management agency information, provides guidance on evacuation planning, and explains various measures to reduce property damage through home retrofit. This publication is currently in its third edition with a little over 75,000 copies printed to date and distributed to Hawai'i residents and partners around the state. The 4<sup>th</sup> Edition will be a major update with more options on home retrofit, as well as new shelter in place guidance.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

<http://seagrant.soest.hawaii.edu/homeowners-handbook-prepare-natural-hazards>