



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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by

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and

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HB 656 – RELATING TO THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Chair Choy, Vice Chair Ichiyama, and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program (Hawai'i Sea Grant) supports the intent of HB 656 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the University's Board of Regents Approved Executive Biennium Budget. This legislation endeavors to enable the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program to develop disaster preparedness educational materials and to disseminate these educational resources statewide through community outreach workshops and seminars.

The 2015 hurricane season beat all previous records for tropical cyclone activity in the Central Pacific with 15 tropical cyclones (tropical cyclones are either tropical depressions, tropical storms, or hurricanes). Residents in the state of Hawai'i were very fortunate that none of these systems struck the Hawaiian Islands. In 1982, Hurricane 'Iwa caused \$320 million in damages on Kaua'i and in 1992, the damage caused by Hurricane Iniki was \$2 billion. As those in our emergency management community continually advise Hawai'i stakeholders, it's not a matter of if, but when Hawai'i will experience a natural disaster.

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, emergency shelter locations, as well as lessons learned from Hurricane Iselle. 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.

HB 656 provides funding support to Hawai'i Sea Grant for developing disaster preparedness educational materials and conducting systematic and targeted outreach to Hawai'i stakeholders statewide that increases community resilience to coastal hazards. 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).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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