

# SCR138/ SR83

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT A STUDY REGARDING THE FEASIBILITY AND COST OF CONSTRUCTING A SMALL COMMERCIAL BOAT HARBOR AND SMALL COMMERCIAL AIRPORT IN SOUTH PUNA.

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 31, 2015  
2:50 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 229

**S.C.R. 138 / S.R 83**  
**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT A STUDY**  
**REGARDING THE FEASIBILITY AND COST OF CONSTRUCTING A SMALL**  
**COMMERCIAL BOAT HARBOR AND SMALL COMMERCIAL AIRPORT IN SOUTH**  
**PUNA**

Senate Committee on Transportation

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) understands the challenges and hardships faced by the Puna community and offers **comments** related to these resolutions.

It is important to emphasize that without federal support and approvals, the DOT cannot proceed with these projects. In addition, without the State of Hawaii support for a general obligation bond, it is difficult to move forward with the merits of these resolutions which seek a feasibility study.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony of  
FORD N. FUCHIGAMI  
DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors  
JADE T. BUTAY  
ROSS M. HIGASHI  
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN  
DARRELL T. YOUNG

IN REPLY REFER TO:  
(808) 587-1965

**William P. Kenoi**  
*Mayor*



**Darren J. Rosario**  
*Fire Chief*

**Renwick J. Victorino**  
*Deputy Fire Chief*

**County of Hawai'i**  
**HAWAI'I FIRE DEPARTMENT**  
25 Aupuni Street • Suite 2501 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720  
(808) 932-2900 • Fax (808) 932-2928

March 30, 2015

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Committee on Transportation  
State Capitol, Room 229  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Nishihara:

**Subject: SCR 138 & SR 83, RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**  
**Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2015**  
**Time/Place of Hearing: 2:50 p.m.**

I am Darren J. Rosario, Fire Chief of the Hawai'i Fire Department (HFD). The HFD supports both SCR 138 and SR 83 which request the Department of Transportation to conduct a study regarding the feasibility and cost of constructing a small commercial boat harbor and small commercial airport South Puna.

The district of Puna has been under the threat of the "July 27 lava flow" that has the potential future to severely impact services to thousands of lower Puna residents. Essentially, the lava flow will cut them off from critical transportation infrastructure, which is their lifeline to amongst other things, critical emergency services. The area of lower Puna, currently impacted by the lava flow is home to nearly 10,000 people who live scattered about the nearly 100 square miles predicted to be isolated by an expected impact to Highway 130. Access to critical emergency services and Emergency Medical Transport to the hospital will be severely delayed due to lengthened travel times. The current time from Pahoa to Hilo via Highway 130 is approximately 30 minutes without traffic. Once the flow crosses highway 130 and the alternate Makai routes, travel by ground will then go through the Chain of Craters road and take approximately 2 hours without traffic. Given these challenges it is an absolute necessity to the well being of the residents within the flow to provide alternative travel measures by air and sea.

Retrospective data analysis from the Hawai'i Fire Department shows that approximately 220 emergency incidents are generated from within the impact area per month in which our department is responsible for (Fire, Rescue, EMS, Hazardous Materials).



The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair

March 30, 2015

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The District of Puna is roughly the size of the Island of Kauai, has a population of 45,326 and has become one of the fastest growing districts in the State of Hawai'i with a population increase of 44% since 2000. Over the next 15 years the population of Puna is expected to grow to 75,000, nearly half the current population of Hawai'i Island.

The HFD supports both request in SCR 138 and SR 83. This request is presented to meet the potential increasing demands for Emergency Services on Hawai'i Island specific to Puna in regards to its needs based on the impending lava flow induced isolation. Projects of these magnitudes take time. However, the June 27 Lava flow event has already shown the need to prepare for the future of lower Puna.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (808) 932-2903 or [fire@hawaiiicounty.gov](mailto:fire@hawaiiicounty.gov) should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "DR", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

DARREN J. ROSARIO  
Fire Chief

William P. Kenoi  
Mayor

Walter K.M. Lau  
Managing Director



## County of Hawaii

### CIVIL DEFENSE AGENCY

920 Ululani Street • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720-3958  
(808) 935-0031 • Fax (808) 935-6460

Darryl J. Oliveira  
Civil Defense Administrator

March 30, 2015

Clarence Nishihara, Chair  
Senate Committee on Transportation  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Room 204  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Senator Nishihara,

I would like to take this opportunity to submit this letter of support for Senate Resolution 83 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 138 requesting the Department of Transportation to conduct a study regarding the feasibility and cost of constructing a small commercial boat harbor and small commercial airport in South Puna.

With the ongoing volcanic eruption and previously ensuing lava flow that threatened to inundate and isolate portions of the Puna community on Hawaii Island; transportation and access was identified as a critical need and priority to maintain. As proposed in the aforementioned resolutions, a feasibility and cost analysis of developing air and maritime transport capabilities on a limited scale to address the possible isolation impact would provide clarity and confirm the viability of these two transportation options.

I realize and appreciate the cost and resources that may be necessary to complete such studies however, in light of what has and may transpire with respect to the eruption activities, the proposed studies would lay the foundation for future discussions as to the potential options and assist with the managing of expectations based on sound evidence and a comprehensive analysis.

I humbly request your support of SCR 138 and SR 83 and would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information or answer any questions you may have.

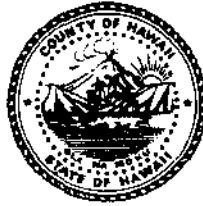
Sincerely,

Darryl J. Oliveira  
Administrator

Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency



*Aaron S. Y. Chung*  
Council Member  
District 2 South Hilo



Phone No.: (808) 961-8272  
Fax No.: (808) 961-8912  
aaron.chung@hawaiiicounty.gov

## ***HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL***

*County of Hawai'i*  
*Hawai'i County Building*  
*25 Aupuni Street*  
*Hilo, Hawai'i 96720*

March 30, 2015

Dear Chairman Nishihara, Vice-Chair Harimoto and Members of the Transportation Committee:

Subject: **Testimony in Support** of SR 83 and SCR 138

Please accept this brief testimony in support of SR 83 and SCR 138 which requests the State Department of Transportation to conduct a study regarding the feasibility and cost of constructing a small commercial boat harbor and small commercial airport in south Puna. The lava flow which threatens lower Puna has certainly highlighted the need for such facilities, but there are also commercial and other practical considerations which would tend to justify such facilities as well.

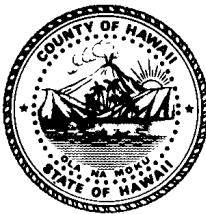
I can safely represent on behalf of my Hilo constituents, that we support any measures which serve to advance the security, commerce and well-being of our neighbors in lower Puna. We join in with the rest of our island family in supporting the above resolutions.

Mahalo for your consideration.

  
AARON S. Y. CHUNG, Council Member  
Hawai'i County Council

ASYC:awm

**DANIEL K. PALEKA JR.**  
*Council District 5 – Puna Mauka*



*Phone: (808) 961-8026*  
*Fax: (808) 961-8912*  
*Email: dpaleka@hawaiiicounty.gov*

## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

*County of Hawai'i*  
*25Aupuni Street, Suite 1402*  
*Hilo, Hawaii 96720*

Dear Representative Ruderman and Transportation Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SR83.

This resolution requests funds for the Department of Transportation to conduct a feasibility study for a harbor and/or an airstrip to be designed and constructed for Lower Puna. An airstrip in the rural district of Puna could be used for a variety of reasons that include medical evacuations, freight and passenger transport, and even tour groups.

This is an important investment in our community's future and I ask that you recommend approval

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

Mahalo,

Daniel K. Paleka Jr.  
Hawai'i County Council Member

DENNIS "FRESH" ONISHI  
Council Member  
District 3



PHONE: (808) 961-8396  
FAX: (808) 961-8912  
EMAIL: [donishi@co.hawaii.hi.us](mailto:donishi@co.hawaii.hi.us)

**HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL**  
25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

March 30, 2015

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation

Dear Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Harimoto and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 138, requesting the Department of Transportation to conduct a study regarding the feasibility and cost of constructing a small commercial boat harbor and small commercial airport in south Puna.

The district of Puna is currently experiencing one of the most unique challenges in the country. An ongoing lava flow that has no indication of stopping in the near future. Although activity at the flow front is stalled, the source is still pumping.

In order to remain on the pro-active side of history, we must start now and plan for the event that the June 27<sup>th</sup> lava flow could possibly cross Highway 130, essentially cutting off access to south Puna. Even with emergency routes in effect, travel time to Hilo will be more than two hours one-way.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and I strongly recommend the passage of this measure.

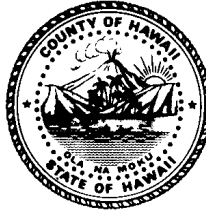
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis Onishi", written in a cursive style.

Dennis "Fresh" Onishi  
Hawai'i County Council Member



**Maile Medeiros David**  
Council District 6  
Portion N. S. Kona/Ka'ū /Volcano



Phone: (808) 323-4277  
Fax: (808) 329-4786  
Email: [maile.david@hawaiicounty.gov](mailto:maile.david@hawaiicounty.gov)

## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

County of Hawai'i  
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A  
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.  
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

March 30, 2015

Senate Committee on Transportation  
Chair Clarence K. Nishihara  
Vice Chair Breene Harimoto

[TRAtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:TRAtestimony@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
[sennishihara@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:sennishihara@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
[senharimoto@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:senharimoto@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Re: Testimony in Support of SR 83 and SCR 138 Requesting a Feasibility and Cost Study of Constructing a Small Commercial Boat Harbor and Small Commercial Airport in South Puna

Aloha Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Harimoto and Senators:

On behalf of myself and as Councilmember representing the rural districts of South Kona, Ka'ū and Volcano Village (Council District 6), I express my strong support of the Department of Transportation conducting a study of the feasibility and cost of constructing a small commercial boat harbor and small commercial airport in South Puna, Hawai'i.

The growing community of Puna is faced with unusual circumstances due to its proximity to an active volcano as well as to other natural disasters such as tropical storms and hurricanes. For these reasons I believe that it is in our best interest to protect the health, safety and welfare of the residents of Puna therefore the request, as outlined in SR 83 and SCR 183 be favorably acted upon by the Senate Committee on Transportation.

I express my strong support of SR 83 and SCR 138. Mahalo a nui loa for your positive consideration.

Very truly yours,

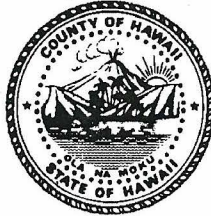
Maile David, Council Member  
Council District 6, S. Kona, Ka'ū, and Volcano Village

cc: [senruderman@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:senruderman@capitol.hawaii.gov)

*Serving the Interests of the People of Our Island  
Hawai'i County Is an Equal Opportunity Provider And Employer*

**VALERIE T. POINDEXTER**

*Council Vice Chair  
Council District 1*



Phone: (808) 961-8828  
Fax: (808) 961-8912  
Email: [vpindexter@co.hawaii.hi.us](mailto:vpindexter@co.hawaii.hi.us)

**HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL**

*County of Hawai'i  
Hawai'i County Building  
25 Aupuni Street, Suite 1402  
Hilo, Hawai'i 96720*

March 30, 2015

Committee on Transportation

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair

Senator Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair

Email: [sennishihara@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:sennishihara@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Email: [senharimoto@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:senharimoto@capitol.hawaii.gov)

Subject: Testimony Supporting SCR 138, Relating to a Study for a South Puna Small Boat Harbor and Small Commercial Airport

Hearing: March 31, 2015, 2:50 p.m., Room 229

Dear Chair Nishihara and Vice Chair Harimoto:

On behalf of myself and the constituents of Council District 1 in Hamakua, County of Hawai'i, I would like to express our support of SCR 138, and submit a brief testimony as follows:

This resolution requests the Department of Transportation to conduct a study regarding the feasibility and cost of constructing a small commercial boat harbor and small commercial airport in South Puna.

I strongly support and urge the enactment of SCR 138. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Valerie T. Poindexter, Council Member  
District 1, Hamakua

VP/sc

**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
**To:** [TRA Testimony](#)  
**Cc:** [gina1645@gmail.com](mailto:gina1645@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SR83 on Mar 31, 2015 14:50PM  
**Date:** Monday, March 30, 2015 5:58:29 PM

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**SR83**

Submitted on: 3/30/2015

Testimony for TRA on Mar 31, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Regina Miller	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I live in the Puna District and saw the tremendous need for both a small commercial harbor and airport during the recent lava flow threat to our only highway. I believe a study about the feasibility of such should be conducted, to at least establish whether or not such plans could be carried out.

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**To:** [TRA Testimony](#)  
**Cc:** [richard@bidleman.net](mailto:richard@bidleman.net)  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SCR138 on Mar 31, 2015 14:50PM  
**Date:** Friday, March 27, 2015 4:46:45 PM

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**SCR138**

Submitted on: 3/27/2015

Testimony for TRA on Mar 31, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Richard Bidleman	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Should lower Puna be isolated by a lava flow, at minimum we need an emergency airport and harbor. We are the fastest growing district in all of Hawaii.

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**Cc:** [ttravis12@mac.com](mailto:ttravis12@mac.com)  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SCR138 on Mar 31, 2015 14:50PM  
**Date:** Sunday, March 29, 2015 4:45:45 PM

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**SCR138**

Submitted on: 3/29/2015

Testimony for TRA on Mar 31, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Thomas Travis	Individual	Support	No

Comments: I support this measure. Although the immediate danger of lava crossing major thoroughfares into and out of lower Puna is diminished in the past weeks, the specter of restricted access in an emergency remains. Action of this resolution would address that restricted access.

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**From:** [mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov](mailto:mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov)  
**To:** [TRA Testimony](#)  
**Cc:** [viviansuet@hotmail.com](mailto:viviansuet@hotmail.com)  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for SR83 on Mar 31, 2015 14:50PM  
**Date:** Monday, March 30, 2015 11:16:08 PM

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**SR83**

Submitted on: 3/30/2015

Testimony for TRA on Mar 31, 2015 14:50PM in Conference Room 229

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Vivian S. Toellner	Individual	Comments Only	No

Comments: Aloha, Hawaii county has 4,028.41 square miles of land area and 1,057.71 square miles of water area. As of 2010, the total Hawaii county population is 185,079, which has grown 24.48% since 2000. The population growth rate is much higher than the state average rate of 12.28% and is much higher than the national average rate of 9.71%. Puna is a diamond in the rough. Affordable Paradise will bring even more retirees. With thousands of Subdivision Lots just waiting for homes to be built, huge population growth is to be expected. In the Puna area, there are very few places to access the coast safely due to the jagged cliffs. Coastline access needs to be improved for safety, transportation and economics. The beautiful coastline drive needs to be maintained with development of more parks. Increased safe ocean access is needed to meet the needs of the people. The Subdivisions were built and now the people are coming. Please wisely plan now for the future. Mahalo.

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