SENATE RESOLUTION

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HIGHWAYS DIVISION, AND HAWAII COUNTY TO COLLECTIVELY DEVELOP A PLAN TO IMPROVE MEALANI ROAD AND ESTABLISH A PROTOCOL TO USE MEALANI ROAD AS AN EMERGENCY BYPASS ROUTE WHEN MAMALAOHA HIGHWAY IS INACCESSIBLE.

WHEREAS, maintaining road access during disasters and emergency road closures is of critical importance for public safety; and

WHEREAS, Mamalahoa Highway is the only road that provides entry and exit from the east side of the town of Waimea in Hawaii County; and

WHEREAS, closures of Mamalahoa Highway have caused significant problems for residents and commuters trying to access school, work, church, the post office, stores, and their homes; and

WHEREAS, Mealani Road is an unimproved road under the jurisdiction of the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands that is the only existing potential emergency bypass route during times when Mamalahoa Highway is blocked on the east side of Waimea; and

WHEREAS, Mealani Road is privately owned by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and currently requires approval by the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands for use by individuals or entities other than homestead residents; and

WHEREAS, the establishment of Mealani Road as an emergency bypass route requires collaboration between the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, Department of Transportation Highways Division, and Hawaii County to provide access and public safety during use of this single-lane road; and
WHEREAS, previously, collaboration between the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and Hawaii County led to the successful completion of improvements to Kahilu Road for emergency access in Waimea; and

WHEREAS, it is in the public interest to improve Mealani Road and establish a protocol for the use of Mealani Road as an emergency bypass route; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirtieth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2020, that the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands; Department of Transportation Highways Division; and Hawaii County, including the Hawaii County Department of Public Works, Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency, Hawaii Police Department, and Hawaii Fire Department, are urged to collectively develop a plan to improve Mealani Road and establish a protocol to use Mealani Road as an emergency bypass route when Mamalahoa Highway is inaccessible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands; Department of Transportation Highways Division; and Hawaii County, including the Hawaii County Department of Public Works, Hawaii County Civil Defense Agency, Hawaii Police Department, and Hawaii Fire Department, are requested to submit to the Legislature, no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2021, a report describing their plan to improve Mealani Road and to establish a protocol to use Mealani Road as an emergency bypass route when Mamalahoa Highway is inaccessible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Chairperson of the Hawaiian Homes Commission, Director of Transportation, Deputy Director for Highways of the Department of Transportation, Mayor of Hawaii County, Chairperson of the Hawaii County Council, Director of the Hawaii County Department of Public Works, Hawaii County Civil Defense Administrator, Hawaii County Police Chief, and Hawaii County Fire Chief.

OFFERED BY: [Signature]