

**UPDATE FROM THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE
CURRENT AND FUTURE RESPONSE EFFORTS RELATED
TO THE ISLANDWIDE IMPACTS OF THE KONA LOW
STORMS
Testimony**

***EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT (EM) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Apr 1, 2026 @ 01:00 PM

Support: 0

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 5

Name: Denise Antolini	Email: antolinid@gmail.com	Zip: 96712
Representing: Self	Position: I wish to comment	Submitted: Mar 31, 2026 @ 09:04 PM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair Waters, Council members,

As a member of the North Shore Neighborhood Board, I listened to the stories of heartbreak and heroism in our community, especially the storm rescuers and survivors in Waialua, during the Mayor's visit to our board meeting last Tuesday in the aftermath of the back to back Kona Lows.

I had minor storm damage at my home in Pupukea Friday night and - once power and internet came back on - I quickly became aware that I was very very lucky - so many in our Moku have been so severely affected - displaced and damaged for the long-term. The stories of loss are still unfolding. It's not over by any stretch.

We need to take action soon to do better.

The community response was phenomenal.

The City, State, and Federal response should have met the level of the emergency but - other than the amazing efforts of some locally based front line first responders who themselves were impacted- it did not - it was too slow, too disjointed, and too weak.

I am grateful however for the current range of coordinated government services and support being offered such as at the Waialua center.

I have been gathering comments from community members about their views on the City's weaknesses in responding to the emergency and on how to go forward toward a more resilient future. Here are some high priority comments:

1. The HNL alerts and the tsunami sirens were grossly deficient in content, reach, and timing.

For hundreds to the thousands in the impact zone with no power and no internet, the HNL alerts were meaningless as they asked the recipient to click on links. Also, the vast majority of residents are not signed up for the alerts. And the alerts came too infrequently and too late.

Solutions:

- mandatory sign up (allow opt out)
- include all vital information in text not a link

- add phone call alerts (phones still worked - at least until batteries ran out) - some people don't text
- make alerts hourly when conditions pose severe threat to life and safety
- fix ALL the sirens
- make the sirens coded for the various alerts and clear in message (fit with loudspeakers) educate people what the siren signals mean

These items, I believe, all fall under the Department of Emergency Management, and Director Randall Collins. His performance throughout the Kona Low storms should be thoroughly evaluated by an independent reviewer.

I was shocked and deeply disappointed that Mr Collins did not come with the Mayor and his team to our Neighborhood Board meeting last Tuesday.

The KEY department head that failed to handle the alerts properly did not show face to our community or take responsibility!

The Mayor and the City Council should investigate these and related response issues and his performance - and hold him accountable.

2. Conduct a thorough after-incident city wide departmental and leadership assessment and make that process publicly accessible to those most affected

As part of that assessment, conduct serious and intentional community outreach to gather information and stories, facts, perspectives, impacts - meet people where they are - don't rely on downtown style surveys with electronic formats. Invest in a professional locally based interview team that meets with every person affected. Yes it's that important. Report back in person and in community meetings not through cold reports and websites.

3. Update the 2018 Kaiaka Bay watershed report with an Urgent Action Plan that includes comprehensive data on the land use and development issues that appear to have greatly contributed to the flow of water and the sediment load - eg landslides, filled in ditches, lack of clearing of streams, bridge areas.

This should include an analysis of Act 121, which shifted maintenance responsibility to adjacent stream owners - do they have the guidance, resources, information, and a coordinating system to effectuate action? If so, and they don't act, then enforce. If not, better to educate, support, and incentivize appropriate action asap. And who coordinates - so that owner A is not doing something that undermines the efforts of owner B etc?

This big and urgent update should be led by OCCSR and start with an immediate voluntary collaboration and scoping meetings among the 2018 partners and the North Shore community until funding is secured.

4. Ensure the soil, mud, dust, air, streams are all tested - on private and public property - for the full range of contaminants - including pathogens, heavy metals, chemicals, radioactivity, and any other pollutant that could now or later affect human health. Yes that is DOH and EPA's kuleana but City can make sure it happens in a locally driven and comprehensive way.

Test now. We know from past similar disasters that immediate comprehensive testing is critical to decision making.

These are just a few of the recommendations that I've heard as top priorities from community members to help us recover and to help the City do better when the next big storm poses a threat.

Unfortunately these kinds of "rain bombs" will be increasing in frequency and severity - we need to take action, together, asap.

Mahalo,

Denise Antolini

Pupukea resident

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Elisa Hammer	elisa.hammer@me.com	96789

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Mar 31, 2026 @ 10:34 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
MAX PARISI	max.parisi@gmail.com	96791

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 1, 2026 @ 07:33 AM

Testimony:

The DOT needs to maintain the ditches and flumes along farrington highway, we cannot count of the small Ag lot owners or home owners to understand or conform to a larger flood mitigation system that was once created and maintained by previous large land owners (Waialua Sugar, Dole, Monsanto etc.).

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Hilo Martines	k17himart@yahoo.com	96791

Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 1, 2026 @ 10:36 AM

Testimony:

Aloha and mahalo, Chair and members of the City Council, for convening this briefing and allowing me the opportunity to comment.

My name is Hilo Martines. I am a proud pua Pauahi and a resident of Waialua. I never imagined I would be speaking before the Council, but here I am.

In Waialua, we are no strangers to minor flooding or rising rivers and streams. However, the speed, level, and height of this recent event exceeded what we are accustomed to and resulted in significant impacts to our community.

Today, I would like to comment on three areas: Kuleana (responsibility), Kaiāulu (community), and Ea (self-sovereignty).

Kuleana translates to responsibility. Our government has the responsibility to plan for, mitigate, respond to, and facilitate recovery from disasters. However, this responsibility does not lie solely with government. Each person, each family, and each community also has a role in every stage of the disaster cycle.

In any disaster, no response will ever be fast or sufficient enough to completely prevent damage. At the end of the day, no lives were lost. There are important lessons to be learned from this incident, and I hope meaningful improvements will be made moving forward.

Kaiāulu translates to community. We witnessed our community show up for one another in countless ways—helping clean, donating supplies, coordinating resources, and deploying assets—all in the name of caring for each other. This is the very reason communities exist.

At the end of the day, we only have each other. This spirit extends beyond Waialua and across Hawai'i. We saw it during the Lahaina wildfires and during other disasters. We are isolated, and if this event had been more widespread, it is difficult to imagine the scale of need. Still, I am confident that our communities will continue to show up for one another, time and time again.

Ea has many meanings. Today, I would like to speak specifically about self-sovereignty—the ability for individuals to access information and make informed decisions. There are public resources commonly used by government decision-makers that are also available to residents, if you know where to look.

One example is USGS Water Alerts, which allows individuals to sign up for text notifications when stream gauges rise to cautionary levels. Another is HNL Alert, which provides automated notifications from City departments related to traffic, weather events, and other emergencies.

By accessing these tools, individuals can assert self-sovereignty and make informed decisions to protect themselves and their families—without having to rely on or wait for government action.

We all share a collective responsibility in every phase of recovery. Now is not the time to point fingers or assign blame, nor is it the time to push politics. Now is the time to come together—to restore our community, care for our neighbors, and

strengthen our resilience for the next disaster.

Mahalo for allowing me to comment on this agenda item.

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Racquel Achiu	rhachiu@gmail.com	96791
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	I wish to comment	Apr 1, 2026 @ 11:02 AM

Testimony:

Aloha chair waters and CouncilMember's. My name is Racquel Achiu of the Wailua Moku. Mahalo for this opportunity to comment on the response efforts of recent weather events. February 7 through March 21 we have endured three back to back severe weather impacts with each event more intense than the last. No opportunity to dry out, recover and prepare for the next. Although weather is one of mother nature's blessings and sometimes unwelcome consequence. The events of March 20th and the days to follow were nothing short of pure devastation. As Kilauea erupts with lava Mount Ka'ala has erupted with water. There's no genuine description I can find to appropriately describe with this storm. Although we are all extremely grateful that there was no loss of life in this incredibly impacting event, there is tragedy in the response and action in the extremely delayed support of the Department of Emergency Management. The alerts were extremely late, offering no ability for anyone, especially our Kupuna to mobilize themselves to Safety. The alerts were inconsistent and confusing. The alerts did not prompt timely, efficient or effective mobilization of our emergency response agencies/departments. It has been said repeatedly that the lack of attention or the "playing down" of the forecasted weather event was the start of what we now know a severe lack of understanding and response to a significant weather event. I have to agree. There were two good things to come out of this as I mentioned no loss of life and witnessing a community that was cut off, trapped and forced to jump into action to support and save each other. It is my genuine hope that we do not take those things for granted, and we really focus and pay attention to the need for improvement & transparency within the emergency process. I believe, regardless of what community you are in there can be a very strong collaboration between community and agencies to ensure that each Moku & agencies can learn, improve and progress a system, and its process to secure the safety and well-being of our local residence for the future.

I look forward to being a part of this discussion and efforts to make sure that, other than the amazing commUNITY coming together, my kids never have to face what we saw and experienced in the past couple of weeks. Please take this opportunity to ensure that our agencies, policies, plans first responders and communities are fully equipped and funded to efficiently and appropriately prepare and respond to our needs. Make our public safety and all that is relative a priority for our future ability to make & survive. I said before I will get credit or credit is due as disappointed as my community is I commend Mayor and his team for volunteering to attend our North Shore neighborhood board meeting, knowing full well they would be faced with an incredible amount of emotion, frustration, stress, and dissatisfaction. They sat they listened and I know I couldn't have been easy but what needs to happen now is the community needs to know they were heard and they need to see the results of that interaction. I'm here not to just point out the wrong. I'm here to say, IM HERE LETS GET THIS DONE TOGETHER. There is NO GREATER INVESTMENT than IN THE PEOPLE & COMMUNITIES that make this island, this entire Pae`āina stand out from any other land. Mahalo

31 Mar 2026

Aloha Chair Waters and Members of the Committee on Executive Management,

I am writing regarding the recent flooding impacts in Waialua and Hale'iwa in the context of the Kona low storm events and the City's Long-Term Disaster Recovery (LTDR) planning.

The LTDR Plan emphasizes resilience, risk reduction, and coordinated recovery across systems. The flooding we witnessed in Waialua highlights a critical gap between planning and implementation—particularly in how we manage water across the watershed.

This is not a new issue. Existing plans include the 2018 Waialua Watershed-Based Implementation Plan (developed for the C&C DFM and the DOH) and the 2016 North Shore Watershed Management Plan (developed by the State Commission on Water Resource Management under DLNR and submitted to the Commission for adoption into the State's water planning framework). In addition to addressing water quality issues, these plans have already identified key concerns such as runoff, erosion, sedimentation, and reduced stream capacity. These plans recommend practical actions, including drainage and channel maintenance, erosion and runoff control, and managing the watershed as an integrated system (of system) from mauka to makai.

At the same time, on-the-ground conditions have changed. The loss of coordinated plantation-era irrigation and drainage systems has reduced the ability to manage how water is slowed and directed across the land. Today, a patchwork of land uses—diversified agriculture, exposed soils, and development—combined with narrowing streams has reduced both control and capacity within the system.

In alignment with the LTDR Plan's focus on coordinated, long-term resilience, I respectfully recommend:

1. Establish a North Shore Flood Resilience Task Force

Create an interagency task force to align LTDR priorities with existing watershed plans and ensure coordinated implementation across City and State agencies.

2. Leverage, review/update, and implement existing watershed plans

Direct agencies to review and report on the status of recommendations from the aforementioned watershed plans and related studies, including what has been completed, what remains, and barriers to implementation.

3. Prioritize near-term risk reduction actions

Accelerate maintenance and clearing of streams, culverts, and drainage infrastructure, and address areas contributing to runoff and sediment buildup. Otake River has been dredged recently and further dredging in known areas of flooding is needed. Erosion/sediment control measures and riparian maintenance are promptly needed as well.

4. Advance watershed-level analysis and planning

Support a comprehensive watershed flood study, including potential partnership with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, to better model current conditions (particularly in catastrophic rain events, ie 2 back to back Kona lows) and guide future investments. "Follow the wai."

5. Strengthen coordination across land and water management

Ensure that land use, drainage, and watershed management are addressed as a connected system, consistent with LTDR resilience goals.

The LTDR Plan provides a strong framework. The watershed plans provide clear technical guidance. What is needed now is coordinated execution across all agencies as well as with the community members.

Mahalo for your leadership and commitment to building a more resilient Waialua and overall North Shore for many generations to come!

Very Respectfully,
Elisa Hammer