

MISC. COMM. 170

*EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT (EM)

**UPDATE FROM THE ADMINISTRATION ON THE
CURRENT RECOVERY EFFORTS RELATED TO THE
ISLANDWIDE IMPACTS OF THE KONA LOW STORMS.
Testimony**

***EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT (EM) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Apr 29, 2026 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 0

Oppose: 1

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Tara Gregory	info@taramalia.com	96825
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Oppose	Apr 29, 2026 @ 08:10 AM

Testimony:

Aloha Chair and Councilmembers,

My name is Tara Malia Gregory, a resident of East Honolulu. I am submitting testimony regarding the City's response (or lack there of) to the recent Kona Low storms and the broader discussion of resiliency infrastructure.

I appreciate the Administration's focus on long-term planning, including resiliency hubs. However, what we experienced on the ground during this storm raises serious concerns about the effectiveness of current emergency response systems, including resiliency hubs that will be non-effective just as any other state agency seems to have a massive delay and lack of boots on the ground when the emergency hits.

During the Kona Low event:

Many communities did not receive coordinated support until several days after impact

In some areas, response lagged up to 7 days after emergency proclamations and multiple days after flooding events

Communication and deployment appeared fragmented and delayed

At the same time, community-led efforts mobilized rapidly:

Our team activated three initial response locations within hours

Expanded to a fourth hub during Mānoa flooding

Prepared to assist in Waimānalo, particularly supporting vulnerable and houseless populations

This was not due to funding, formal authority, or infrastructure—it was due to existing relationships, local knowledge, and urgency

This contrast highlights a critical issue:

The City's formal systems are not currently structured to respond at the speed and scale required during real emergencies. Money is not the issue. Funding is not the issue. Systemic and leadership break down is the issue. And we all know from the Lahaina fires and recent floods and fires here on O'ahu that the Lahui and the Community always come through; not the city and not the state.

While resiliency hubs may serve a long-term purpose, hypothetically they cannot and will not replace:

Decentralized response networks

Community-led coordination

Rapid deployment capabilities

If these hubs do not activate immediately during crisis, they risk becoming another layer of delayed response rather than a solution.

Recommendations:

-Conduct a transparent review of the City's response timeline & previous Emergency Management budget during the Kona Low storms

-Identify specific breakdowns in communication, coordination, and deployment

-Ensure accountability for emergency response timelines under current authority structures

People do not trust government. Especially in an emergency. For good reason.

Resilience is not theoretical. It is measured in minutes and hours, not days and weeks.

If we are serious about protecting our communities, we must align policy, funding, and infrastructure with what actually works in real-time conditions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully with Aloha,

Tara Malia Gregory