HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL

KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

No. 26-161

RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE CITY ADMINISTRATION TO DEVELOP MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR ALL RESILIENCE HUBS CONSTRUCTED OR RETROFITTED USING THE FUNDS APPROPRIATED IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2027 EXECUTIVE CAPITAL BUDGET.

WHEREAS, in a May 10, 2026 Honolulu Star-Advertiser news article, the Hawai'i State Climatologist stated that as ocean waters north of Hawai'i continue to warm due to climate change, storms that have historically tracked south of the island chain are increasingly likely to approach O'ahu, raising the islandwide risk of a major hurricane strike; and

WHEREAS, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser news article also reported that no county or State of Hawai'i emergency management agency contacted by the Honolulu Star-Advertiser could confirm that existing public shelters can withstand winds beyond that produced by a Category 1 hurricane, the lowest storm classification on the Saffir-Simpson hurricane wind scale, and agencies instead directed residents to retrofit their homes or seek shelter at other residents' retrofitted homes; and

WHEREAS, of the 25 hurricane refuge areas currently designated on O'ahu, only 20 have been retrofitted to withstand even Category 1 hurricane winds, leaving the island without a single publicly designated shelter confirmed to withstand a storm greater than a Category 1 storm; and

WHEREAS, emergency management officials recommend that every household maintain at least a two-week supply of food, water, medicine, first aid supplies, alternative power sources, and communications equipment in the event of a hurricane or other natural disaster—a standard that many O'ahu households and communities currently lack the resources or facilities to meet; and

WHEREAS, other jurisdictions, including Baltimore, Maryland; Seattle, Washington; Los Angeles, California; and Vancouver, Washington, have addressed similar vulnerabilities by establishing and planning for networks of "resilience hubs," which are defined as community-rooted facilities that are equipped with backup solar and battery power and emergency supplies, and have the capacity to serve as staging areas for emergency personnel and supply distribution during and after a disaster; and

WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu ("City"), through Ordinance 26-13 (Bill 23 (2026), CD2, FD1), appropriated capital funding for the planning and design of resilience hubs, including $2,000,000 for the Hau'ula resilience hub (Project Number

2021134) and $16,000,000 for a resilience hub in each City Council district in which a resilience hub is not currently planned, for a total combined appropriation of $18,000,000; and

WHEREAS, the effective use of this funding requires the City Administration to establish clear technical standards for resilience hub siting, construction, and equipping, as well as a clear, accountable structure for delegating responsibility for planning, building, and ultimately operating each resilience hub; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu that the City Administration is requested to develop minimum standards for all resilience hubs constructed or retrofitted using funds appropriated in the fiscal year 2027 executive capital budget that will address structural resilience, emergency shelter capability, backup electrical power, potable water, emergency communications, medical support, food storage, and other essential functions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the foregoing standards should address the design of facilities capable of withstanding a hurricane exceeding Category 1 on the Saffir-Simpson hurricane wind scale and the siting of resilience hubs outside of areas designated as tsunami evacuation zones, flood hazard areas, or other zones of significant disaster exposure where technically and financially feasible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each resilience hub should be designed to serve as both a community emergency shelter and a community supply depot, and be stocked on an ongoing basis with adequate food, water, medical supplies, communications equipment, and other emergency resources sufficient to support anticipated occupants during an extended disruption, consistent with preparedness standards recommended by State of Hawai‘i and county emergency management agencies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each resilience hub should be equipped with a solar photovoltaic and battery storage microgrid system adequate to maintain critical life safety functions, emergency communications, refrigeration of medications, lighting, ventilation, charging of communication devices, and other essential operations during an extended interruption of utility service; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Administration is requested to develop objective criteria for the identification and prioritization of new resilience hub locations that should, at a minimum, take into consideration: the population of the service area; social vulnerability; existing access to emergency shelters and critical

services; exposure to hurricanes, tsunamis, flooding, wildfires, and other natural hazards; proximity to existing community institutions capable of supporting resilience hub operations; accessibility by roadway, pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit networks; and the suitability of proposed facilities for retrofit or new construction; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Administration is requested to develop a procedure for designating the entities responsible for the operation and management of each resilience hub that should involve one or more of the following:

1. Establishing objective eligibility criteria—such as nonprofit or government status, physical capacity, demonstrated community trust, and capacity to undergo emergency preparedness training—that a candidate organization must meet to be certified as a Resilience Hub Operator;

2. Allowing the Neighborhood Board for the area in which a hub is located to nominate a candidate organization for certification;

3. Allowing the Councilmember representing the district in which a hub is located to nominate a candidate organization for certification;

4. Allowing an open application process established by the lead department or agency; and

5. Allowing the designated lead department or agency to certify a Resilience Hub Operator upon a finding that the nominated organization meets the established eligibility criteria; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Administration is requested to designate a City department or agency to assume lead responsibility and develop a clear implementation strategy for the activation of resilience hubs constructed or retrofitted using the funds appropriated in Ordinance 26-13 (Bill 23 (2026), CD2, FD1) for such purpose; and

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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Mayor; the Managing Director Designate; the Director of Emergency Management; and the Chief Resilience Officer and Executive Director of the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency.

INTRODUCED BY:

Esther Kiaʻāina

Councilmembers

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

JUL 8 2026

Honolulu, Hawaiʻi

Report Title:
Disaster Response; Disaster Preparedness; Disaster Planning; Climate Change; Resilience Hub; Executive Capital Budget and Program for Fiscal Year 2027; Department of Emergency Management ("DEM"); Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency ("CCSR")

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