



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

May 29, 2018

Governor David Ige
Hawaii State Capitol
415 S. Beretania St.
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Puna Lava Disaster

Dear Governor Ige,

As the State Representative for lower Puna, I would like to thank you for coming to our community and meeting with our residents during these very trying times. Your presence and the State's help during this crisis is very much appreciated by all. State government has been so much more proactive in helping Hawaii County deal with this disaster compared to the 2014 lava flow and Hurricane Iselle dual disasters.

While the focus is on the immediate threat of the health and safety of our residents caused by the eruptions and lava flow, we must also plan for the emerging housing crisis that many people will face. A group of government, non-profit organizations and volunteers have been meeting weekly to proactively get ahead of this problem and look for solutions.

This group is composed of the County's Office of Aging, HOPE Services, Neighborhood Place of Puna, Blue Zone Foundation, Child & Family Services, Office of Mental Health, former Civil Defense Director Daryl Oliveira, attorneys, and many others; and is called DART: Disaster Assistance and Recovery Team. Based upon our we are asking that you seriously consider issuing executive orders for the following:

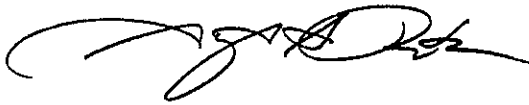
- 1. A waiver of the Transient Accommodations Tax for a period from now until one month after the emergency declaration has ended for rentals of less than 180 days for those who live in the evacuated zones.** As shown by the 2014 lava event, most residents want to move back and just need a place to stay until they are able to return. If the 2014 lava event is a gauge, and that event lasted less than 3 months, the affected residents are looking at less than 6-month rentals. Moreover, vacation rental holders would want their accommodations to be available for tourists when the emergency is over.

2. Allowing the tenant to waive the landlord-tenant code (HRS Chapter 521) such as deposit, notice, termination, and covenants of habitability. The basis for this request is to open up vacant foreclosed houses or vacant houses undergoing foreclosures and alleviate concerns by banks, realtors and commissioners who will want the ability to notify a tenant of lease termination for less than 30 days and who do not want to be sued for breach of the covenant of habitability for homes that have not been inspected.

3. Requesting that you sign into law, SB 2401- Ohana Zones. Although Hope Services, Neighborhood Place of Puna and other homeless advocates have opposed SB2401, Hope Services, NPP, County of Hawaii and other Hawaii Island advocates have since figured out a collaborative work with the requirements of the bill and are now advocating quick passage of it. Expediting at least the Hawaii Island portion of this bill in funding will go a long way to ease the increasing homeless crisis that is facing us amid this disaster.

The above are requests from a consensus of the DART providers as well as from myself. Thank you so much for your consideration. If I can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,



Representative Joy A. San Buenaventura

District 4

Puna, Hawaii Island

cc: C. Kimo Alameda, Office of Aging, DART

Brandy Menino, HOPE Services