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HAWAII NEWS

## State lays out worst-case storm scenario for ports

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The Port of Honolulu is the single major supply point for the state, with the overwhelming majority of goods requiring six to eight days' transit time.

Three thousand tons of food enter daily for sustenance. Forty-two containers arrive by ship every hour on average.

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency on Thursday laid out for lawmakers what could happen if a "worst-case scenario" tsunami or hurricane hit the vital port region with 3 feet of water and high winds.

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Sunken ships, toppled cranes and other debris could clog the harbor. In such an emergency, there would be no emergency surplus of food and water.

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**VULNERABILITY OVERVIEW**

*An assessment of Hawaii's on-hand resources/operational capacities found:*

**SUPPLIES**

On-demand warehousing system means there is no emergency surplus.

**FOOD/WATER**

Five to seven days' worth after port closure.

**SHELTER**

Supply cannot meet the demand.

**MEDICAL**

Three days of general supplies, seven days of medications.

**FUEL**

100 percent reliance on importation through sea logistics chain.

**ELECTRICITY**

60 percent of power plants are in/on inundation zones.

**PORTS**

No large-scale salvage/dredging equipment (seven- to 10-day arrival time).

**AIRPORTS**

Four days of fuel, low cargo capacity.

*Source: Hawaii Emergency Management Agency*

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"That means once the port closes, we have about five to seven days, depending on when that last shipment came in, of food," said David Lopez, HI-EMA's critical systems planner.

Major port damage requiring heavy salvage could result in the loss of shipping imports for 19 to 30 days — prompting some officials to suggest families prepare a 30-day supply of food and water instead of the previously recommended 14.

It's not likely that air cargo could make up for the loss of access to the harbor. Air cargo moves only about 1 percent of the state's cargo, Lopez said.

It was a bleak disaster assessment — with even more cascading effects for power, emergency services and fuel — and a review that has been going on since 2015 to evaluate the state’s capabilities to cope with such catastrophic events.

State Rep. Matt LoPresti (D, Ewa Villages-Ocean Pointe-Ewa Beach) said the state remains “extremely vulnerable.”

LoPresti asked for the briefing on the emergency planning, which is expected to continue well into the future.

“I think there’s a lot of misconceptions and false hope that somehow the military is going to come in and save us if something terrible happens,” LoPresti said after the briefing. “We need, I think, to put out the proper message that people ought to have not just 14 days of food and water supply, but a month’s worth.”

The “critical systems vulnerabilities overview” is being done in parallel with, and overlaps in some areas, with the Feb. 18 “all-hazards preparedness improvement action plan and report” ordered by the governor and authored by Brig. Gen. Ken Hara, the state’s deputy adjutant general.

That report followed the Jan. 13 false ballistic missile alert that went out statewide. Gov. David Ige said he would seek more than \$2 million from the Legislature in the short term to build emergency preparedness, with longer-term costs still to be identified.

HI-EMA said Thursday the review for emergency responses was started in 2015 by former Administrator Vern Miyagi and is a multidecade look at mainly preparing the state for hurricanes and tsunamis.

In the event of a hurricane or tsunami seriously damaging the Port of Honolulu and Daniel K. Inouye International Airport, a “hand to mouth” food supply and severe shortages could be in place for 30 days.

The state only has about 50 hurricane shelters in schools that were “hardened” through a retrofit for severe storms, but 35 percent of the state’s 1.4 million residents might seek shelter in a Category 4 storm, officials said.

The port could begin opening at 19 days post-event, reaching 75 to 100 percent operational capability by 30 days, according to HI-EMA. The airport could restore one runway every three days. Military aircraft would be the first expected to land.

State Rep. Cedric Gates (D, Waianae-Makaha-Makua) asked at the briefing about military help.

Brig. Gen. Moses Kaoiwi, HI-EMA's interim administrator, said the military can provide an emergency response in 72 hours, but after that its role would be defense support to civil authorities. The state would have to be prepared to use the National Guard, he said.

Military aid would be much less than people think, LoPresti said.

"We need 3,000 tons of food per day to maintain normalcy — and that's through our tight logistical systems working perfectly," he said.

Lopez, HI-EMA's critical systems planner, said no damage cost estimate has been developed for severe port damage, but Hurricane Katrina caused over \$1 billion in damage to Mississippi ports.

He noted that Florida changed building codes to strengthen structures so far fewer residents have to evacuate from big storms. HI-EMA said the state needs to look at "multi-pronged approaches" like requiring storm hardening for new schools and public buildings.

LoPresti said bills are moving forward looking at requiring any new building to be able to withstand more powerful storms. Other bills propose hardening additional schools across the islands that serve as shelters, he said.

Lopez was asked whether spending additional money and adding cost to harden schools and homes is really worth it.

"I would think it is," he said. "The alternative is losing everything."

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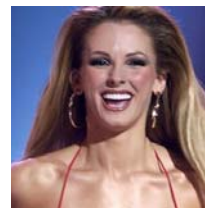
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