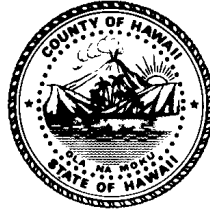


Harry Kim
Mayor



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March 13, 2020

Senator Rosalyn H. Baker, Chair
Senator Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and Health

Dear Chair Baker, Vice Chair Chang, and Committee Members:

RE: SCR 71/SR 38 Requesting the Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation to Convene a Task Force to Conduct a Feasibility Study for Construction of a Hospital in North Kona

The need for a new hospital in Kona has been recognized for years. In 2019, this Legislature considered the specific idea of building a teaching hospital, which could serve as a focus for recruiting, training and retaining the healthcare workers – physicians, nurses and others – that are so sorely needed on Hawai'i Island. But whether a teaching hospital or not, a new facility would be the core to the healthcare infrastructure enhancements needed to care for our growing population, predicted by DBEDT to reach 300,000 by 2040.

A new hospital would enhance and diversify our economy, presently so dependent on tourism. It might even have a positive impact on tourism itself, assuring older or medically fragile tourists that West Hawai'i is a safe place to be and perhaps it even would bring "medical tourists" seeking treatment.

Most of all, it would mean that clinical services and medical services presently absent on-island would be available to our residents, allowing local families to receive care and support at home, often a big part of any recovery.

This Legislature approved a feasibility study once, but the funds lapsed. I sincerely hope that you will approve SCR 71 and SR 38, so that such a study can move forward now.

Respectfully Submitted,


Harry Kim
MAYOR