



**Passenger Vessel  
Association**

103 Oronoco Street, Suite 200  
Alexandria, VA 22314

Phone (703) 518-5005  
Fax (703) 518-5151  
Toll Free 1-800-807-8360

[pvainfo@passengervessel.com](mailto:pvainfo@passengervessel.com)  
[www.passengervessel.com](http://www.passengervessel.com)

February 12, 2019

The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara  
Chair, Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
*and*  
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye  
Chair, Committee on Transportation

Hawaii State Senate  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI

Dear Senators Nishihara and Inouye:

The Passenger Vessel Association (PVA) – the national trade association representing owners and operators of U.S.-flagged passenger vessels of all types – thanks you for scheduling the joint committee hearing on legislation addressing the proper emergency protocol and procedures for Hawaii's harbors and harbor users should potential disasters threaten the State and for demonstrating your interest in the protection of commercial passenger vessels when hurricanes and tropical storms strike.

This past October, PVA held its three-day Western Region meeting in Lahaina, attracting about 125 attendees from California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska, as well as those from the Aloha State.

PVA wishes to convey its support for approval of Senator Inouye's SB1505, a bill to authorize the Department of Transportation to make harbor facilities temporarily available as a harbor of safe refuge when the National Weather Service forecasts a tropical storm or hurricane strength cyclones, unless specifically prohibited by the United States Coast Guard Captain of the Port.

PVA's membership includes 22 companies operating passenger vessels in Hawaii. We are concerned about the policy change that was abruptly put in place last year that appears to preclude our members from seeking refuge in commercial harbors under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation. PVA urges your committees to lead the way in re-establishing a policy that protects Hawaii's

passenger vessels and their crews when hurricanes and other severe storms threaten the islands.

The smaller harbors in Hawaii from which most PVA members operate do not provide sufficient protection for those vessels when severe weather strikes. It is necessary to move the vessels to more sheltered locations, and for many years these movements were allowed. PVA knows of no instances in which there were adverse impacts on the commercial harbors under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation when these emergency relocations took place.

Throughout the United States, it is standard practice for passenger vessel operators to move their vessels to sheltered locations when a hurricane is bearing down upon their customary harbors of operation. It is not standard practice for these vessels to move into the open sea to ride out hurricanes. Most U.S.-flagged passenger-carrying vessels have a tonnage of less than 100 gross tons; as relatively smaller vessels, they do not have the seakeeping characteristics needed to endure hurricane or tropical storm conditions at sea. Forcing such vessels out of sheltered harbors jeopardizes the vessels and especially creates a life-threatening situation for the crew members.

The Passenger Vessel Association urges your support for SB1505 to enable Hawaii's smaller passenger vessel operators to have controlled access to the commercial harbors under the jurisdiction of the Department of Transportation to serve as a harbor of refuge in the event of hurricanes and tropical storms. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Robert J. Lawler Jr.", is positioned above the printed name.

Robert J. Lawler Jr.  
President - 2019

# **Vessel Members in Hawaii**

## **Passenger Vessel Association**

Atlantis Submarines Hawaii LLC, Honolulu  
Blue Dolphin Cruises, Ele'ele  
Captain Andy's Sailing Adventures, Ele'ele  
Fair Wind, Inc., Kailua-Kona  
Holo Holo Charters, Inc., Ele'ele  
Hone Heke Corporations (*dba* Expeditions), Lahaina  
Island Star Excursions, Kula  
Kanoa, Inc. (*dba* Body Glove Cruises), Kailua-Kona  
Kona Sunrise Charters, Inc., Kailua-Kona  
Makena Classic Charters, Wailea  
Maui Classic Charters, Kihei  
Mid Pacific of Hawaii, Kaneohe  
NaPali Sea Tours, Inc., Ele'ele  
Ocean Joy Cruises, Kapolei  
Pacific Whale Foundation, Wailuku  
Pier 36 LLC, Honolulu  
Pride of Maui, Wailuku  
Quicksilver Charters, Lahaina  
Star of Honolulu Cruises and Events, Honolulu  
The Lahaina Cruise Company, Lahaina  
Trilogy Excursions, Lahaina  
Whitey Boat Cruises (*dba* Na Pali Catamarans), Kilauea