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Letter From Your Chairs

Hello Everyone,

My name is Christian Agwanda, and I have been involved in Model UN for 3 years. I have attended this very conference as a delegate, and I have also attended a conference hosted by the University of Chicago. I am the Co-Chair to your chair, Nehemiah St. Surin. Nehemiah has been involved in Model UN for three years as well. Outside of Model UN, I play lacrosse, and I am in HOSA, and Nehemiah is also involved with activities like football and campus ministry. Nehemiah also chaired weekly middle school MUN for the 24-25 school year.

Nehemiah and I are very excited to be chairing SJMUNC's first-ever Middle School committee! No matter your experience level, we want to help everyone learn and leave the committee a better delegate than when they came in. We chose this topic in order to challenge every delegate while also trying to keep it interesting. This committee is only what you make of it. In order to be successful, you should read the briefing paper, know your position well, and do as much research as possible. Although we want you to work hard in this committee, the main goal is that every delegate has a good time, no matter how much experience you have doing Model UN.

Feel free to email us with any questions or concerns (agwanc27@stjohnshigh.org, stsurin26@stjohnshigh.org), and we look forward to meeting you all in committee.

Sincerely,

Your Chairs

Statement of the Problem

The Island of Hawaii is famous as a vacation spot for a vast number of people. Boasting nearly 10 million yearly visitors, this state in the US lives up to its name as a premier getaway for travelers. Some people make a long voyage to see historical landmarks, such as Pearl Harbor, and also to take a deep dive into cultural sites like the temple ruins at Pu`ukoholā Heiau [poo-oo-koh-hoh-LAH HAY-ow]. All of this to say that Hawaii and its people are incredibly important to the world. Which is why people are extremely anxious as Hawaii's horizon gleams with the possibility of peril.

Seismologists have assessed and are certain that the tectonic plate in the Pacific is shifting as a result of rubbing against the tectonic plate containing North America. This will cause issues with fishing in the region; it also puts intercontinental shipping routes in danger, but the most pressing issue is that these shifts create a host of issues: volcano eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis. The last of which is forming currently, North of the Hawaiian Islands. It is currently projected to be a class 1, which means it is *expected* to cause minimal damage upon landfall.

However, the initial impact is not the only issue accompanying tsunamis. These waves (even at a lower caliber) can also cause stronger currents in the surrounding area. This endangers swimmers, local fishers, and disturbs their way of life. However, there is no guarantee that the tsunami's status will remain at a 1 as the storm progresses.

Because of "internal changes," the current administration will not be swooping in to save the day. However, because of the state's treasure trove of National Parks, the dept of the Interior is invested in this issue and lends its hand, but ultimately this crisis is in the hands of the Hawaiian state legislature.

History of the Problem

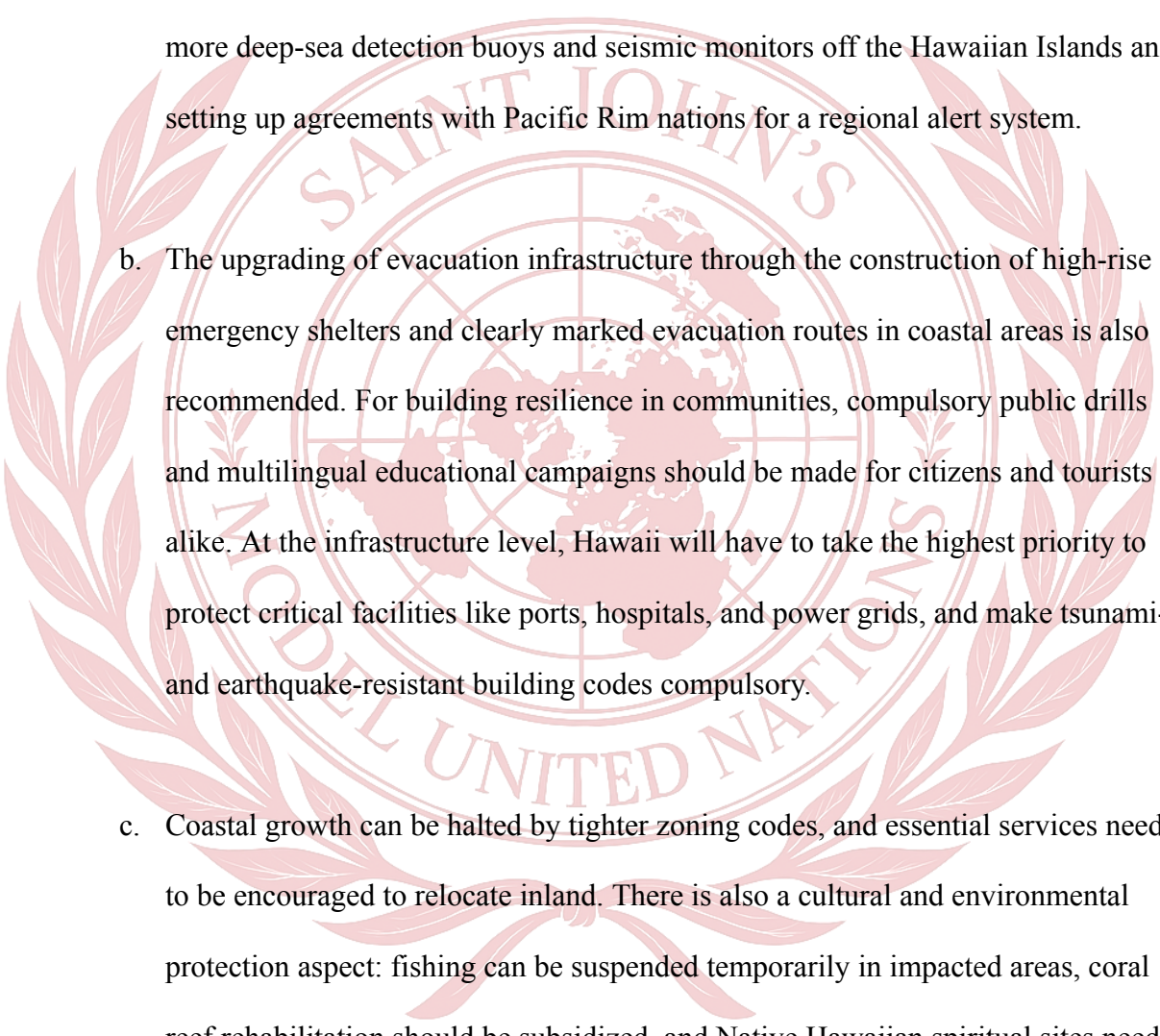
The Hawaiian Islands, formed over millions of years by volcanic activity at the Pacific Tectonic Plate's hot spot, are familiar with natural disasters. Located on the turbulent Pacific Ring of Fire, Hawaii has been the victim of many volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and tsunamis, such as the 1868 Great Ka'ū Earthquake, which resulted in landslides and deadly tsunamis. Another disaster, the 1946 tsunami, devastated the seacoast city of Hilo after an earthquake in the Aleutian Islands killed more than 150 people. Disasters such as these have occurred for as long as Hawaiian history can trace.

In the past few years, seismologists have been able to measure plate movements in the Pacific Ocean more and more accurately. These movements are powerful enough to generate earthquakes beneath the water that lead to the disasters listed above. Hawaii has had warning systems before, but its geography makes it extremely susceptible to acts of nature.

The development of tourism in Hawaii and the increase in shipping in the Pacific have increased the importance of the islands to the international and regional economy. Natural disaster environmental effects, particularly on the marine ecosystem, and fishing and indigenous cultural communities, are just some of the issues that must be considered when planning for natural disasters and, more importantly, tsunamis to hit.

Possible Solutions

A complete response to the threat facing Hawaii will involve disaster readiness in the short run and planning in the long run.

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- a. There is a need to alter tsunami early warning systems. This involves placing more deep-sea detection buoys and seismic monitors off the Hawaiian Islands and setting up agreements with Pacific Rim nations for a regional alert system.
 - b. The upgrading of evacuation infrastructure through the construction of high-rise emergency shelters and clearly marked evacuation routes in coastal areas is also recommended. For building resilience in communities, compulsory public drills and multilingual educational campaigns should be made for citizens and tourists alike. At the infrastructure level, Hawaii will have to take the highest priority to protect critical facilities like ports, hospitals, and power grids, and make tsunami- and earthquake-resistant building codes compulsory.
 - c. Coastal growth can be halted by tighter zoning codes, and essential services need to be encouraged to relocate inland. There is also a cultural and environmental protection aspect: fishing can be suspended temporarily in impacted areas, coral reef rehabilitation should be subsidized, and Native Hawaiian spiritual sites need to be determined and preserved with the help of Indigenous leaders.
 - d. Politically, Hawaii can establish a state disaster relief and recovery fund.
Regionally, the state can collaborate with other Pacific nations and global

organizations such as ASEAN and invite NGOs to assist in improving preparedness and recovery.

e. Economic measures such as temporary injections of funds into tourism and fishing industries and local "staycation" campaigns will shore up the economy during crises.

f. Science and technology can be tapped by investing more in AI, satellite surveillance, and drone use for rescue and evaluation missions.

Bloc Positions

Senate

Ronald Kouchi (D)

As the presiding officer of the Senate, Kouchi plays a key role in shaping the legislative agenda and managing debates. His leadership is crucial in organizing a swift and unified response to the tsunami threat.

Michelle Kidani (D)

Kidani supports the Senate President and often represents the Senate in public matters. She also has strong ties to education policy, which can help coordinate school safety during natural disasters.

Dru Mamo Kanuha (D)

Kanuha organizes the Democratic majority and guides legislation through the Senate. He is influential in ensuring that disaster readiness bills are prioritized and passed quickly.

Les Ihara Jr. (D)

Ihara focuses on long-term policy development and ethical governance. His experience will be vital in crafting resilient and sustainable disaster management policies.

Brenton Awa (R)

As leader of the Senate Republicans, Awa represents the conservative voice in the legislature. He may push for cost-effective solutions and greater accountability in emergency spending.

Kurt Fevella (R)

Fevella, the only Republican Senator for several years, is known for championing working-class concerns. He may focus on ensuring disaster plans protect local families and small businesses.

Chris Lee (D)

Lee brings a strong background in environmental and energy policy from his time in the House. His expertise will be critical for climate-resilient infrastructure planning.

Jarrett Keohokalole (D)

Keohokalole oversees health-related legislation and emergency preparedness. He will be central to organizing public health responses and hospital readiness.

Donna Mercado Kim (D)

A veteran lawmaker with deep institutional knowledge, Kim brings leadership experience and a focus on government oversight. She is likely to push for transparency in crisis spending.

Joy San Buenaventura (D)

With experience in both chambers, San Buenaventura has a reputation for advocating for vulnerable communities. Her voice is important in ensuring equitable access to aid and medical services.

Samantha DeCorte (R)

As a newer member, DeCorte may represent a fresh conservative perspective. She could advocate for local control and small-government approaches to disaster recovery.

Lorraine Inouye (D)

Inouye is the Senate Transportation and Culture, and the Arts Chair. Representing Hawaii Island, she has extensive experience with issues like infrastructure, transit, and rural communities. In a crisis like a tsunami, she'd be focused on ensuring rural evacuation routes and protecting cultural heritage sites.

Gil Keith-Agaran (D)

Keith-Agaran is Vice Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee and has served in various capacities related to economic development and environmental policy. He could play a key role in drafting legislation to protect property rights, ensuring legal safeguards, and supporting economic recovery.

Angus McKelvey (D)

A longtime legislator, McKelvey is focused on consumer protection and commerce. He may advocate for ensuring that insurance systems work effectively in the wake of natural disasters, and that business recovery is fair and accessible.

House of Representatives

Scott Saiki (D)

Saiki is the top leader in the House and sets the legislative priorities for the chamber. His coordination with Senate leadership will be crucial for passing emergency legislation.

Gregg Takayama (D)

Takayama assists the Speaker and often takes the lead on administrative or procedural matters. He can help streamline emergency proposals through the legislative process.

David Alcos III (R)

As a new legislator, Alcos represents emerging Republican voices in the House. He may focus on representing rural or suburban communities facing tsunami risks.

Della Au Belatti (D)

Belatti manages the majority party's strategy and floor action. She is a key negotiator for aligning party priorities on disaster resilience.

Elijah Pierick (R)

Pierick leads the House Republicans and may prioritize community-level solutions. He is likely to question spending and advocate for targeted aid over large government expansion.

Troy Hashimoto (D)

Hashimoto ensures party discipline and vote alignment in the Democratic caucus. He will play a strategic role in rallying support for urgent bills.

Lauren Matsumoto (R)

Matsumoto communicates the minority party's views during floor debates. She may spotlight how disasters affect families and schools in suburban areas.

Jeanne Kapela (D)

Kapela oversees school safety and educational policy. Her role is key in protecting students and ensuring continuity of education during evacuations or disasters.

Linda Ichiyama (D)

Ichiyama controls policy over roads, public transit, and infrastructure. Her leadership will be vital in evacuation planning and rebuilding transportation networks.

Mark Hashem (D)

Hashem focuses on housing access and development. He will be central to ensuring displaced residents have access to temporary and long-term shelter.

Ernest "Ernie" Martin (D)

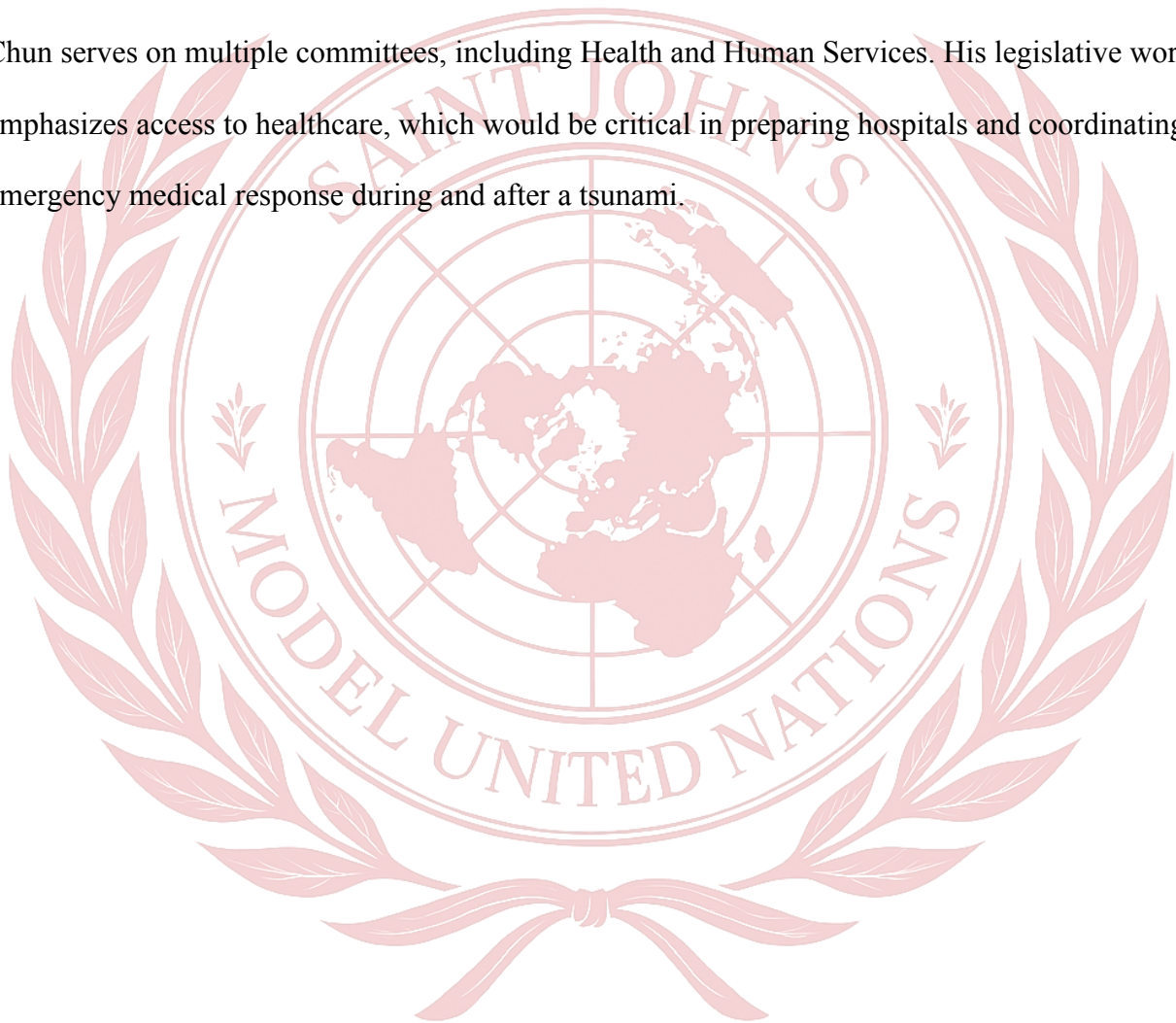
Martin brings municipal government experience and local-level insight to the House. He can help bridge state efforts with county emergency services and urban planning.

Nadine Nakamura (D)

As the Majority Leader in the House and a representative from Kauai, Nakamura is deeply involved in housing, planning, and disaster recovery efforts. She brings leadership and local insight, especially from areas historically impacted by natural disasters.

Cory Chun (D)

Chun serves on multiple committees, including Health and Human Services. His legislative work emphasizes access to healthcare, which would be critical in preparing hospitals and coordinating emergency medical response during and after a tsunami.



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