

**TO: Forum Chairperson**

**FROM: Ricardo Soto-Lopez, State Hazard Mitigation Strategist *RSL***

**RE: State Hazard Mitigation Forum SWOT Results**

**Date July 14, 2022**

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Fourteen (14) members of the State Hazard Mitigation Forum (Forum) participated in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Strategy Session, facilitated by five (5) HI-EMA Resilience Branch staff members who provided technical support. The goal of the exercise was to review the Forum's strategic direction as HI-EMA initiates the 2023 State Hazard Mitigation Plan (Plan) update. The members reviewed the Forum's mission and purpose and validated the current 2018 Plan Goals, but strongly recommended the use of "**Nature Based Solutions**" as an additional goal of the 2023 Plan. In addition, the two (2) Tidal Basin consultants presented a proposed Mitigation Action for the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) to pursue high wind retrofits of residential structures. The Forum members reviewed and approved recommendation to add the action to the 2018 Plan, enabling the DHHL to submit an application for funding under the DR-4510 HMGP.

**Strengths: In what areas does the State Hazard Mitigation Forum excel?**

1. The Forum has wide subject matter expertise and geographic representation.
2. The Forum has committed individuals dedicated to protecting the State of Hawai'i.
3. There is consistent and regular participation by Forum members.
4. Virtual meetings work, but the membership value the regular face to face meetings.
5. The Forum is flexible and adaptable.
6. The Forum is experienced in a range of hazard responses.
7. Over the years the Forum members have brought new hazard subject matter areas to be addressed by the forum (e.g., fire, drought, public health)
8. The integration of subject matter expertise has strengthened the diversification of the SHM Plan and supported the educational process across subject matter expertise areas.
9. The Forum has received excellent staff support.

**Weaknesses: In what areas does the organization needs to improve to meet its mission and enhance its services.**

1. There are competing priorities and time constraints that hinder the work of the Forum.
2. A leadership succession process must be institutionalized.
3. An "Onboarding Process" needs to be institutionalized; SME need to know what they are getting into when joining the Forum.
4. There is "planning fatigue."
5. There is a Washington DC and Hawai'i disconnect. FEMA program requirements do not consider the socio-cultural local knowledge of Hawai'i. The fact that no project focused

on Nature Based Solutions received funding consideration during the latest round of BRIC is considered an example of this. **The Forum needs a FEMA direct connection.**

6. The geographic distribution of the Forum creates a need for tighter links amongst its members for better cross fertilization of subject matter expertise.

**Opportunities: What external factors create a growing need for the Forum’s mission and services.**

1. Organizationally, an annual work program tied to strategic goals is needed.
2. More in person meetings are needed. Invite speakers from other Federal, state, and local agencies. Encourage better connections to private sector actors like the Hawai’i Electric Co. who has an interest in mitigation and can help leverage funding for projects.
3. Reestablish a direct connection with FEMA.
4. Determine an effective way of addressing Building Code enhancements. How does the Forum support the counties concerning Building code enhancements? This is a hot button issue with FEMA which will affect mitigation funding. A Direct Connection with Building Code Council might be a place to start.
5. Support HI-EMA’s Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) efforts.
6. Seek support from other agencies engaged in hazard mitigation e.g., NOAA, USGS, HUD. (and greater cross fertilization with the Hawai’i Earthquake-Tsunami Advisory Council).
7. Develop a statewide program that incentivizes the use of residential “hurricane clips”
8. Encourage expanding financial resources for climate adaptation strategies.
9. Invite Building Code Officials and Flood Plain Managers into the Forum for joint sessions.
10. Improve contact with Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS), Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), and the Department of Health (DOH).

**Threats: What external factors could harm/hinder the Forum’s mission and services.**

1. The lack of Building Code enhancement and building permitting issues are very serious and do not promote hazard mitigation. These may require systematic (legislative) reform.
2. We are working in jurisdictional silos!
3. Public perception and education concerning “hazard mitigation” is minimal, this reduces support for comprehensive hazard mitigation actions.
4. The lack of capacity for grant writing in the Counties reduces potential for hazard mitigation funding and actions.
5. There is a lack of public awareness on the entire concept of Hazard Mitigation.
6. It is difficult to prove hazard mitigation effectiveness.
7. There is a lack of funding to complete action items in the Plan.

### **Forum Work Program for next 1+ years**

- 1 – support State Hazard Mitigation Plan Update (through next summer)
- 2 – Support Building Code updates/enhancements, solicit input from Co Building Code Officials
- 3 – Support HIEMA in EMAP process (which is broader than just Hazard Mitigation)
- 4 - Invite FEMA participation (ex officio) on Forum
- 5 – Presentations from Building Code Officials, Flood Plain Managers, HI Electric Co
- 6 – Support Climate Change/SLR initiatives, Social Justice/Equity, Nature-Based Solutions
- 7 – Develop onboarding process & leadership succession (work with Larry Kanda after he returns)