



July 2, 2020

RESOLUTION URGES STATE TO REINFORCE PRE-TRAVEL TESTING

Honolulu City Council Chair Emeritus Ron Menor today introduced Resolution 20-164, urging the State of Hawai'i to beef up its pre-travel COVID-19 testing protocol, set to begin August 1, which will let passengers bypass the mandatory quarantine if they prove that they've tested negative prior to arriving.

Resolution 20-164 – URGING THE GOVERNOR TO TAKE ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO LIMIT TRAVEL-RELATED SPREAD OF COVID-19 TO KEEP OAHU SAFE FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS ALIKE – recommends that state officials implement additional safeguards including a second diagnostic viral test to incoming travelers, who tested negative, before allowing them to bypass the mandatory 14-day quarantine.

Chair Emeritus Menor emphasized in a recent letter to Governor David Ige that more stringent measures are needed to better protect residents and visitors, and how the state proceeds could affect the reopening and revitalizing of our economy devastated by the pandemic (letter attached to this email news release).

“It’s vital the state’s pre-boarding testing plan is done right and safely as we begin to reopen our doors, and that’s why I’m concerned the current protocol could result in a problematic increase of COVID-19 cases here unless additional safety measures are implemented,” said Chair Emeritus Menor. “Travelers will be arriving from numerous cities where coronavirus cases are spiking and many visitors will be clustered in resort and hotel locations where prevention precautions such as social distancing and wearing of face coverings are oftentimes not followed.”

The Chair Emeritus believes pre-boarding testing will not keep out travelers who are pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic for COVID-19 or who contract the virus after being tested prior to arrival. These travelers could potentially spread the virus to numerous communities.

The key precautionary steps in Resolution 20-164 include the following:

- Requiring incoming travelers with a negative pre-boarding test to take a second follow-up diagnostic viral test within seven days of the initial test in order to confirm the negative result, (test could be paid from an additional incoming passenger fee);
- Working with private laboratories already processing tests in Hawai'i to significantly ramp up testing capacity;

- Implementing effective tracking and contact tracing of incoming passengers, including developing a mobile phone application, or “app,” to track and trace persons with whom an infected traveler has come into contact, and mandating its use by travelers;
- Developing a surveillance system to monitor high-risk settings in the tourism industry and providing testing for industry employees who come into frequent contact with visitors;
- Ensuring that the systems and resources are in place to effectively enforce the mandatory 14-day self-quarantine for travelers who have not undergone and passed pre-boarding testing;
- Ensuring that the information about the pre-boarding test requirement is well publicized to alert those with plans to travel to Hawai‘i.

Chair Emeritus Menor feels strongly that unless all these safety precautions are implemented, the 14-day quarantine should continue to be mandatory for all incoming passengers. His concerns are shared by many in our communities still struggling to recover and fearing another COVID-19 wave.

In May, the Chair Emeritus also wrote a letter with Councilmember Tommy Waters to legislative leaders to urge them to implement a comprehensive testing and contact tracing program. On June 10, 2020, the Council’s Select Committee on Economic Assistance and Revitalization approved Resolution 20-141, CD1, urging the Governor and State Legislature to adopt and allocate funding for a plan to test incoming travelers for COVID-19 including a second diagnostic viral test within seven days after the initial negative test.

Resolution 20-164 will be on the agenda for approval at the next City Council Meeting on July 8, 2020. For more information on this measure or the Honolulu City Council, please go to the following web sites: <http://www.honolulucitycouncil.com> or <http://www.honolulu.gov/council>

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