

# **Governor's Address on False Alert**

January 15, 2018

I want to begin by offering my personal apology for the fear, anxiety and heartache the false alert on Saturday created for you. It was terrifying for all of us – our families, visitors, and especially, the children of Hawai'i.

My number one priority is the safety and security of the people of Hawai'i and our visitors. Our everyday heroes are protecting our state, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. I thank them for their dedication and sacrifice.

I will not stand for scapegoating of our emergency management personnel when a number of unfortunate errors caused this event. Death threats are completely unacceptable and not how we do things here.

I am the governor and these good, decent emergency personnel work for me. I am ultimately responsible.

I wish I could say there was a simple reason for why it took so long to get the correction to the false alert out. While we got to Twitter, TV and Facebook fairly quickly,

we were hamstrung by a number of factors making it difficult to get a timely cancellation out to cell phones.

It is clear what happened Saturday revealed the need for additional safeguards and improvements to our state system.

I already directed the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to cease their ballistic missile defense internal warning drill until a full review of the facts and circumstances surrounding the false alert is concluded.

We created an immediate process with a pre-scripted cancellation and false alert message.

We imposed a two-step, two-person rule for all TV, radio and wireless activation.

And we established better protocols and lines of communication across our emergency management network.

Moving forward, there is much to fix, plan for and do.

Today, I signed an Executive Order appointing Brigadier General Kenneth Hara, the Deputy Adjutant General, to oversee a comprehensive review of our emergency

management enterprise and to immediately implement needed changes. He will be working closely with General Miyagi and the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency team.

General Hara is also tasked with helping us, government, businesses, families and individuals know what to do, where to go and how to prepare. Children going down manholes, stores closing their doors to those seeking shelter and cars driving at high speeds cannot happen again. We will do a better job of educating the public.

General Hara will give me an initial action plan within 30 days and a formal report in 60 days.

We've already made a number of fixes.

On Saturday, we went to work immediately to implement improvements to our emergency management system, staffing, and procedures to fix these problems. Let me be clear, false notifications – and waiting for what felt like an eternity – will not happen again. You have my promise on this.

I have also been pushing for the ability to test the cellular alerts, just as we do the monthly siren test. But it has

been blocked nationwide. This has prevented us from testing the cell phone warning alert system.

Long before Saturday, I signed a formal opt-in agreement with FirstNet. This is a nationwide broadband network for the first responder community being built across the state.

FirstNet makes it possible to exchange critical information instantly among all of Hawai'i's responder community.

They will have the latest and most accurate information and will be able to respond more quickly.

FirstNet will continue to function should telephone circuits and cell systems be overloaded.

I look forward to partnering with the legislature and our Congressional delegation to make sure we provide you with the tools and resources you need to keep you and your families safe.

We are a resilient community. We look out for and help each other.

Hawai'i knows how to stand strong and defend itself. But we must also work for a more peaceful world. We must demand a de-escalation with North Korea, so sirens and warnings become a thing of the past.

In the words of Martin Luther King, Junior, who we remember today, "The time is always right to do what is right."

Thank you and aloha.