



PULAALI'I NIKOLAO PULA
GOVERNOR

PULUMATAALA AE AE JR.
LT. GOVERNOR

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
AMERICAN SAMOA GOVERNMENT

PAGO PAGO, AMERICAN SAMOA 96799
Telephone: (684) 633-4116 | (684) 633-4121

DECLARATION OF PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERN

Bridge Safety and Infrastructure Management

WHEREAS, on March 23, 2026, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Hawaii Federal-Aid Division formally notified the American Samoa Department of Public Works (DPW) that multiple bridges within the territory identified structural deficiencies requiring corrective action to protect public safety, and directed DPW to submit a Critical Finding Action Plan detailing the steps and timelines DPW will implement to address and close out these findings; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to 23 C.F.R. Section 650.305, a critical finding is a structural or safety-related deficiency that requires immediate action to ensure public safety; and

WHEREAS, of the thirty-one (31) bridges evaluated along the primary transportation corridors of Tutuila Island and the Manu'a Islands, thirteen (13) bridges were identified as requiring corrective action based on structural condition and engineering evaluation, and among these, four (4) bridges have been identified as the highest priority for reconstruction based on engineering evaluation, public safety considerations, and available funding resources - Se'etaga Bridge (Bridge No. 020), Auto Bridge (Bridge No. 016), Leone (Pritchard's Bakery) Bridge (Bridge No. 025), and Masefau Bridge (Bridge No. 014) – due to documented structural deterioration and the importance of these structures to the territory's transportation network; and

WHEREAS, a total of twenty-nine (29) bridges across the territory are subject to FHWA-directed load posting requirements as a precautionary safety measure, and nine (9) bridges are subject to reduced inspection intervals ranging from one to twelve months, reflecting the need for continued monitoring, maintenance, and investment across the territory's bridge network; and

WHEREAS, upon receipt of the FHWA notification, the American Samoa Government immediately initiated a coordinated response, and DPW has since completed technical reviews of all affected structures, developed load posting requirements and government fleet crossing restrictions, prepared scopes of work for bridge posting and traffic control measures, initiated required environmental and historic preservation reviews, and engaged in ongoing coordination with FHWA regarding the planning, design, funding and reconstruction of priority bridge projects; and

WHEREAS, A.S.C.A. Section 22.5101 establishes the maintenance of bridges, road signs, and authorized road barriers as the government's responsibility to ensure standards that promote safe vehicular travel throughout the territory; and

WHEREAS, these bridges serve as essential infrastructure for residents, emergency responders, commercial operators, and government fleets across the territory, and it is both the legal duty and the moral obligation of the American Samoa Government to inform the public of these conditions, implement reasonable safety measures, and take all available and expedient steps to maintain safe operation of these structures while advancing reconstruction of priority bridge projects and pursuing funding for additional bridge rehabilitation and replacement needs; and

WHEREAS, the American Samoa Government recognizes that the implementation of load restrictions, traffic controls, monitoring activities, and other protective measures is necessary to preserve the structural integrity of affected bridges, protect public safety, and maintain continuity of transportation services while permanent reconstruction solutions are pursued; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, PULAALI’I NIKOLAO PULA, Governor of the Territory of American Samoa, pursuant to the Constitution and laws of American Samoa, do hereby **DECLARE AND ORDER** as follows:

Section 1. Declaration of Public Safety Concern.

A public safety concern is hereby declared with respect to the structural condition of bridges across the territory of American Samoa. The conditions described herein constitute an ongoing public safety concern requiring immediate protective measures to safeguard the traveling public and preserve critical transportation infrastructure.

Nothing in this declaration shall be construed as closing any bridge identified herein. Bridges shall remain open to public travel subject to posted load restrictions and other safety measures implemented by DPW, unless otherwise ordered based upon engineering evaluation. The purpose of this declaration is to implement precautionary safety measures, maintain continuity of transportation services, and advance long-term bridge rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts.

Section 2. Mandatory Load Restrictions.

Effective immediately, the following restrictions are mandatory and legally enforceable under A.S.C.A. Section 22.0102:

(a) **Load Restrictions.** All vehicle operators must comply with posted load limits at all twenty-nine (29) bridges bearing weight restriction signs across the territory. Crossing a posted bridge in a vehicle exceeding the posted load limit is prohibited.

(b) **No Exceptions for Government Vehicles.** Government-operated vehicles are not exempt from the restrictions imposed by this declaration. All government fleet operators must comply with posted load limits applicable to their vehicles and the bridges they traverse.

Section 3. Direction to All Executive Branch Agencies.

All executive branch agency directors are directed, within five (5) business days of the date of this declaration, to: (a) obtain from DPW the applicable load and crossing restrictions for vehicles in

their fleet; (b) brief all drivers and fleet operators under their authority on applicable restrictions; and (c) certify in writing to the Director of Public Works that their agency is in compliance. Agencies whose vehicles are affected by posted bridge restrictions shall coordinate with DPW and adjust operations as necessary to maintain continuity of essential services

Section 4. Direction to the Department of Public Works.

Consistent with DPW's statutory responsibilities under A.S.C.A. Sections 22.5101 and 26.0109(b), and in fulfillment of the territory's obligations under 23 C.F.R. Part 650, DPW is hereby directed to:

(a) Posting and Delineation. Immediately proceed with the installation of load posting signs and traffic delineation devices at all affected bridges in compliance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) and FHWA Standard Specification FP-14.

(b) Critical Finding Action Plan. Submit a Critical Finding Action Plan to FHWA by no later than July 23, 2026, detailing the specific steps and timelines DPW will implement to address and close out all FHWA-identified critical findings.

(c) Priority Bridge Reconstruction. Advance the planning, environmental review, design, permitting, funding, and procurement activities necessary to reconstruct the four priority bridges identified in this declaration: Se'etaga Bridge, Auto Bridge, Leone (Pritchard's Bakery) Bridge, and Masefau Bridge. DPW is authorized to implement immediate protective measures necessary to maintain safe operation of these bridges pending reconstruction. Where necessary to address an imminent threat to public safety, DPW may utilize emergency procurement procedures under A.S.C.A. Section 12.0213.

(d) Federal Coordination. Coordinate all applicable federal review and compliance processes concurrently with field activities to prevent unnecessary delay in the mitigation and reconstruction timeline.

(e) Government Fleet Coordination. Distribute to all executive branch agencies, as soon as practicable but no later than five (5) business days from the date of this declaration, guidance identifying applicable bridge load restrictions and any operational considerations affecting government vehicle crossings.

Section 5. Continued Monitoring.

All bridges subject to this declaration shall continue to be monitored and inspected by DPW in accordance with schedules established by FHWA. Load posting restrictions and safety measures in place are specifically designed to preserve structural integrity and keep these bridges open and available to the public. Any resident observing structural damage, unsafe conditions, or violations of posted restrictions at any bridge is encouraged to report such conditions to the Department of Public Works at DPW Building, 1st Floor, Tafuna, AS 96799.

Section 6. Public Reporting.

DPW shall provide a public status update on bridge mitigation and rehabilitation activities within ninety (90) days from the date of this declaration, and at regular intervals thereafter until all critical

findings identified by FHWA have been resolved.

Section 7. Administration Priority – Territory-Wide Bridge Safety and Reconstruction.

The reconstruction of the four priority bridges - Se'etaga, Auto, Leone (Pritchard's Bakery), and Masefau - is hereby established as an infrastructure priority of this Administration. DPW is directed to aggressively pursue all available federal and territorial funding opportunities and to coordinate with FHWA and other federal partners to advance design, environmental review, and construction activities as expeditiously as practicable. DPW is further directed to pursue available federal discretionary bridge, resilience, emergency relief, and infrastructure funding programs to support long-term reconstruction. Current load postings, monitoring activities, and other protective measures are intended to preserve public safety and keep bridges open and operational while reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts move forward. Nothing in this declaration shall preclude DPW from implementing additional temporary restrictions, lane controls, or protective measures based upon future inspections or engineering recommendations. DPW shall continue monitoring, inspection, and asset management activities for all bridges subject to FHWA findings while advancing reconstruction of priority bridge projects.

Section 8. Dissemination and Filing.

This declaration shall be disseminated promptly by means calculated to bring its contents to the attention of the general public. Copies shall be transmitted to FHWA, the Fono, and all executive branch agency directors.

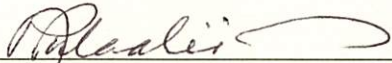
Section 9. Severability.

If any provision of this declaration or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the declaration and the application of its provisions to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected.

Section 10. Effective Date.

This declaration is effective upon signature and shall remain in effect until the Governor determines that the structural deficiencies identified herein have been adequately addressed and terminates this declaration by executive order.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 7th day of July, 2026.


PULAALI'I NIKOLAO PULA
Governor of American Samoa