

SB 564, SD1

Linda Lingle
Governor



Darwin L.D. Ching
Director

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
State Fire Council
830 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 24, 2009

The Honorable J. Kalani English, Chair
Committee on Transportation, International and
Intergovernmental Affairs
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 205
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair English:

Subject: S.B. 564, S.D. 1 Relating to Fire Protection

I am Kenneth G. Silva, Chair of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The SFC and the HFD support S.B. 564, S.D. 1, as originally drafted:

SECTION 2. "(b) The inspection shall be made at least once each year at all public schools, and [~~every two years, or as often~~] as deemed practicable or necessary by the county fire chief, at all other [~~facilities~~] buildings and premises to provide fire prevention and pre-fire planning within the jurisdiction of the county fire chief."

The intent of this measure is to eliminate the two-year requirement for county fire departments to inspect buildings and properties, except public schools, which are inspected annually, and state airports, which are the responsibility of the state.

This bill would allow a county fire department to inspect buildings according to its fire and life safety risk. As our state community and population continue to grow, fire department personnel have not increased proportionately, thus making it difficult, if not impossible, to inspect all buildings in two years.

Thorough and complete fire inspections reduce the risk of fire but are time-consuming because repeated follow-up inspections are conducted until full compliance is achieved.

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Fire departments can utilize their limited resources most efficiently and effectively by focusing on higher-risk occupancies, such as assemblies and high-rises.

In addition to inspecting privately-owned buildings and facilities, county fire departments are tasked with conducting inspections of state and county facilities, including public schools, harbors, state university properties, and government institutions and offices without the assistance from a State Fire Marshal's office, which does not exist. Several states, such as Colorado, Rhode Island, and Washington, have statutes that do not have time requirements and prioritize fire inspections based upon life safety risk.

The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's support on the passage of S.B. 564, S.D. 1 with the revisions made herein.

Should you have any questions, please call HFD Legislative Liaison Lloyd Rogers at 723-7171.

Sincerely,



KENNETH G. SILVA
Chair

KGS/LR:bh