



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

March 31, 2009

The Honorable Marcus Oshiro, Chair  
Committee on Finance  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 306  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Oshiro:

Subject: S.B. 564, S.D. 2 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. 2, which proposes to amend the two-year requirement to five years 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. 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, thus allowing fire departments to prioritize fire inspections based upon life safety risk.

The Honorable Marcus Oshiro, Chair  
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The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's support on the passage of S.B. 564, S.D. 2.

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

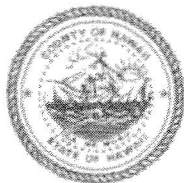
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kenneth G. Silva".

KENNETH G. SILVA  
Chair

KGS/LR:bh

William P. Kenoi  
Mayor



Darryl J. Oliveira  
Fire Chief

Glen P. I. Honda  
Deputy Fire Chief

## County of Hawai'i

### FIRE DEPARTMENT

25 Aupuni Street • Suite 103 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720  
(808) 981-8394 • Fax (808) 981-2037

March 31, 2009

TO : THE HONORABLE MARCUS OSHIRO, CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
FROM : DARRYL OLIVEIRA, FIRE CHIEF  
SUBJECT: SB 564, SD 2, RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION  
HEARING DATE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 1, 2009  
HEARING TIME : 11:00 A.M.

The Hawaii Fire Department supports SB 564, SD 2, which proposes to replace the two-year requirement to five years 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. 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 prioritize fire inspections based upon life safety risk.

The Hawaii Fire Department urges your committee's support on the passage of SB 564, SD 2.

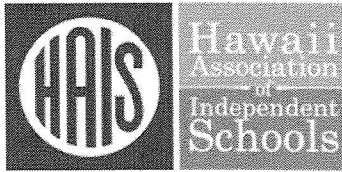
Sincerely,

  
DARRYL OLIVEIRA  
Fire Chief

DO:lk

*Hawaii's County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.*





April 1, 2009  
11:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 308

TESTIMONY TO  
THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

RE: SB 564 SD2 – Relating to Fire Protection

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Robert Witt and I am executive director of the Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS), which represents 97 private and independent schools in Hawaii and educates over 30,000 students statewide.

The Association is in strong support of Senate Bill 564, Senate Draft 2 – Relating to Fire Protection, which proposes to broaden the scope of fire inspections conducted by the county fire chiefs to include all buildings and facilities except state-owned airport facilities, and reduce the frequency of inspections of buildings other than public schools.

In addition, we would like to respectfully request that this measure be amended so that the standards regarding annual fire safety inspections for public schools are equally applicable to the private schools in Hawaii. Specifically, we ask that subsection (b) of Section 132-6 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (line 1 on page 3 of SB 564 SD2) be amended to read: “(1) At least once each year at all public and private schools.”

Student safety, including fire safety, is an issue of the utmost importance to HAIS. This concern is reflected by the accreditation standards of our association, which include specific requirements regarding regular fire safety inspections of school buildings. Given the significant amount of time that students spend on their school campuses and the unique challenges associated with the protection of children, we believe that the fire and life safety risks of school buildings – those of private and public institutions alike – are higher than those of other types of buildings. For this reason, we feel it is imperative that the language of this measure be amended so that, like their public counterparts, private schools are exempt from the less frequent fire inspection requirements of other types of buildings and are subject to fire inspection at least once each year.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.