

# SB 564

**Measure Title:**

RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION

**Report Title:**

State Fire Council Package; Fire Protection; Inspections

**Description:**

Makes discretionary, rather than mandatory, fire inspections conducted by the county fire chiefs. Provides that frequency of inspections of buildings other than public schools shall be as deemed necessary rather than every 2 years.

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 10, 2009

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair  
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
The State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 207  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Espero:

Subject: S.B. 564 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, which proposes 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. 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 Honorable Will Espero, Chair  
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The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's support on the passage of S.B. 564.

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

Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.  
Mayor



Robert F. Westerman  
Fire Chief

John T. Blalock  
Deputy Fire Chief

COUNTY OF KAUAI  
Fire Department  
Mo'ikeha Building  
4444 Rice Street, Suite 295  
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawaii 96766

February 9, 2009

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair  
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs  
The State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 207  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Espero:

**Subject: S.B. 564 Relating to Fire Protection**

I am Robert F. Westerman, member of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Kauai Fire Department (KFD). The SFC and the KFD support S.B. 564, which proposes 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. 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 SFC and the KFD urge your committee's support on the passage of S.B. 564.

Should you have any questions, please call me at 241-4980.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Westerman".

Robert F. Westerman  
Fire Chief

RFW/LR:cz