



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

February 19, 2010

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 210
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kim:

Subject: S.B. 2052, S.D. 1 Relating to Fireworks

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 the intent of S.B. 2052, S.D. 1, which proposes to increase the fee to purchase consumer fireworks and the penalty for fireworks violations; transfers proceeds collected from fireworks violations to the state; and include religious events in the definition of "cultural." However, we believe the proposed graduated fireworks fee system will have practical difficulties in its application. We recommend one fee to purchase 5,000 firecrackers or up to \$50 worth of other consumer fireworks.

Fireworks permit and import license fees have not increased for ten years; however, the cost of services provided by fire, police, and emergency medical services personnel continues to increase. During New Year's, the Honolulu Police Department responded to 1,361 incidents in 2008-2009 and 1,840 in 2009-2010. Statewide, fire departments responded to 33 and 83 fireworks-related incidents for the same periods, and fireworks-related injuries totaled 79 for 2008-2009 and 112 for 2009-2010. In addition, the counties bear the cost and responsibility of cleaning the streets and parks that are littered with fireworks debris. Along with the fire departments' responsibility to ensure the public's safety, the amount of fireworks display permits and accounting of pyrotechnic inventory items have increased.

Chapter 132D-17, Hawaii Revised Statutes states that no county may enact stricter laws or rules relating to the present fireworks law. The SFC believes each county should be allowed to determine the potential hazards that fireworks present and the

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benefit to their community by further restricting fireworks use based on each county's needs and resources.

The SFC and the HFD request your committee's support on the passage of S.B. 2052, S.D. 1, with a revision to the graduated fee schedule.

Should you have any questions, please call SFC Administrator Socrates Bratakos at 723-7151.

Sincerely,



KENNETH G. SILVA
Chair

KGS/LR:jl