

SB 173

RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION.

Prohibits the retail sale or distribution of novelty lighters within the State.



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

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January 31, 2011

The Honorable Will Espero, Chair
Committee on Public Safety, Government
Operations, and Military Affairs
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 231
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Espero:

Subject: S.B. 173 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. 173, which proposes to ban retail sales and the distribution of novelty lighters in the state.

Novelty lighters have features which are attractive to children, including visual effects, flashing lights, musical sounds, or toy-like designs. Since 1996, the Consumer Product Safety Commission recalled thousands of novelty lighters due to their danger to public safety. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), children playing with lighters or matches from 2004 to 2008 accounted for 57,700 fires, 113 civilian deaths, 916 injuries, and \$286 million in property loss. In addition, 47 percent of individuals who started fires using lighters or matches and 65% of the fatal victims were five years old or younger. In the City and County of Honolulu during the period 2003-2010, 48 fires were started by children playing with lighters. This resulted in property and content damage estimated at \$3,915,900.

Many local and national public safety agencies, including the NFPA, the Western Fire Chiefs Association, and the National Association of State Fire Marshals, support the prohibition and distribution of novelty lighters. The function of a lighter can be achieved without the novelty attraction, which only serves to invite dangerous behavior that results in tragedy and destruction. To date, 14 states have banned the sale and distribution of novelty lighters.

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. 173.

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

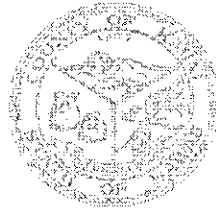
Sincerely,

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

KENNETH G. SILVA
Chair

KGS/LR:cn

Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Mayor



Robert F. Westerman
Fire Chief

Gary K. Heu
Managing Director

John T. Blalock
Deputy Fire Chief

KAUA'I FIRE DEPARTMENT
County of Kaua'i, State of Hawai'i

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January 31, 2011

The Honorable Will Espero
Committee on Public Safety, Government Operations, and Military Affairs
State Senate
State Capitol, Room 231
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Espero:

Subject: S.B. 173 Relating to Fire Protection

I am Robert F. Westerman, Fire Chief of the Kauai Fire Department (KFD) and a member of the State Fire Council (SFC). The SFC and the KFD support S.B. 173, which proposes to ban retail sales and the distribution of novelty lighters in the state. Novelty lighters have features which are attractive to children, including visual effects, flashing lights, musical sounds, or toy-like designs. The Consumer Product Safety Commission has recalled thousands of novelty lighters since 1996 due to their danger to public safety. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), children playing with lighters or matches from 2004-2008 in U. S. municipal fire departments, accounted for 57,700 fires, 113 civilian deaths, 916 injuries, and 286 million in property loss. In addition, forty-seven percent of people who start fires using lighters or matches and 65% of all fatal victims were five years old or younger. In the City and County of Honolulu during the years 2003-2010, 48 fires were started by children playing with lighters and property and content damage were estimated at \$3,915,900.

Many local and national public safety agencies support the prohibition of the sale and distribution of novelty lighters, including the National Fire Protection Agency, the Western Fire Chiefs Association, and the National Association of State Fire Marshals. The function of a lighter can be achieved without the novelty attraction to children. There is no logical reason for lighters to be made to attract greater curiosity and invite dangerous behavior that results in tragedy and destruction. To date, fourteen other states have banned the sale and distribution of novelty lighters.

Please call me at (808) 241-4980 should you have any questions regarding this matter.

Sincerely,

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

Robert Westerman
Fire Chief, County of Kaua'i

RFW/eld