



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 1, 2012

HB 2615
RELATING TO HARBORS FIREBOAT

HOUSE COMMITTEE(s) ON TRANSPORTATION and
PUBLIC SAFETY & MILITARY AFFAIRS

The Department of Transportation (DOT) strongly supports this administration bill to allow for broader flexibility in its management of fireboat operations. Removal of the requirement to reimburse the City & County of Honolulu's Fire Department for the maintenance and operation of the State's Fireboat "Moku Ahi" will allow for more economical management and enable a more comprehensive marine incident response program to be implemented. The maritime community and citizens of Hawaii will be better served by providing DOT with this flexibility.

The "Moku Ahi" is an important component in responding to a landside fire in the harbor vicinity as well as playing an important role in any marine incident response. Recently, the US Coast Guard updated its marine firefighting and salvage regulations that commercial vessel owners/operators must comply with. Marine firefighting requires different training and techniques than landside structure firefighting. In order to comply with the US Coast Guard's regulations and OPA 90 marine spill response requirements, commercial vessel owners/operators have contractual arrangements with organizations for marine spill/firefighting/salvage operations. The organizations that the vessel owners/operators have contracts with are prepared for any type of marine casualty, be it a petroleum spill, vessel fire, or grounding/salvage response through an incident command center with the necessary assets and skilled manpower available whenever necessary.

This Bill does not 'shut down' the "Moku Ahi" and merely allows the Harbors Division to pursue management alternatives ranging from contracting out for management services to entering into an agreement with an existing marine casualty response organization.

We urge your support of our efforts to pursue the most economical and operationally comprehensive manner to provide fireboat services. This bill will provide the DOT with the flexibility to establish a more comprehensive response program and achieve cost savings through economies of scale and expertise of the marine response community that is in place today.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

