

Honolulu, Hawaii
February 13, 2014

RE: H.B. No. 1705
H.D. 1

Honorable Joseph M. Souki
Speaker, House of Representatives
Twenty-Seventh State Legislature
Regular Session of 2014
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Labor & Public Employment, to which was referred H.B. No. 1705 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO FIREFIGHTERS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to provide firefighters with comprehensive medical coverage through workers' compensation benefits and service connected-disability retirement benefits by establishing a presumption that a firefighter who suffers from cancer, blood-borne infectious diseases, and exposure to biochemical substances contracted the condition in the course of employment.

The Hawaii State Fire Council; Honolulu Fire Department; County of Maui, Department of Fire and Public Safety; Hawaii Fire Department; Firefighter Cancer Support Network; and a few individuals provided testimony in support of this measure. The Employees' Retirement System and Hawaii Insurers Council provided testimony in opposition to this measure. The Department of Human Resources Development; City and County of Honolulu, Department of Human Resources; and Hawaii Fire Fighters Association, Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO provided comments on this Measure.



Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting the requirement that compensation that is awarded for cancer include full hospital, surgical, medical treatment, disability indemnity, and death benefits;
- (2) Deleting the presumption for service-connected disability retirement benefits;
- (3) Requiring the Hawaii State Fire Council to:
 - (A) Develop minimum standards and procedures to ensure the health and safety of firefighters and first responders;
 - (B) Ensure personnel are trained regularly on these standards and procedures;
 - (C) Urge county fire departments to conduct an inventory of fire stations to ensure that fire stations meet environmental health and safety standards;
 - (D) Require each fire station to employ best practices that limit employees' exposure to hazardous materials as part of the minimum standards and procedures; and
 - (E) Submit a report to the Legislature on the above objectives; and
- (4) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity, consistency, and style.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Labor & Public Employment that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 1705, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 1705, H.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Finance.



Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Labor & Public
Employment,



MARK M. NAKASHIMA, Chair



