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STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY**  
919 Ala Moana Boulevard, 4th Floor  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 130  
URGING THE STATE SHERIFF TO CREATE A WORKING  
GROUP TO DEVELOP A PLAN FOR EXPANDING AND  
DEPLOYING THE SPECIAL OPERATIONS K9 UNIT TO  
COMBAT THE ILLICIT DRUG ABUSE EPIDEMIC IN THE STATE

by

Nolan P. Espinda, Director  
Department of Public Safety

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs  
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 28, 2017; 1:20 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Public Safety (PSD) **appreciates the intent** of Senate Concurrent Resolution (SCR) 130, which urges the State Sheriff to create and convene a working group to: 1) develop a course of action on how a statewide canine operations unit could be established and deployed to combat the drug epidemic in the State; 2) discuss cross jurisdiction issues, if any, among federal, state, and county law enforcement agencies; and 3) submit a report to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2018 that includes data and statistics on narcotics and money trafficking through the State's five major airports and how the drug epidemic is impacting the State's communities, a plan of action for a proposed statewide canine program to combat the problem, and a cost estimate for such a program. PSD, however, offers the following comments.

First, PSD notes that the Director of the Department of Transportation, who maintains jurisdictional authority over all Hawaii airports, is not included or designated as the convening authority of this working group.

Second, the Department notes that federal, state, and county prosecuting agencies are not specifically listed in the suggested working group. Those agencies, however, may provide relevant and important data and statistics of cases prosecuted for narcotics and money trafficking through the State's five major airports.

Third, PSD further notes that the suggested recommendation that data and statistics on "how the drug epidemic is impacting the State's communities" be deleted or clarified as such a report is subjective and may be wide-reaching to include areas such as social services and education, beyond just law enforcement services provided by the State sheriffs and other county and federal law enforcement agencies.

Fourth, if SB 658, which proposes a new Hawaii Airport Corporation, is passed and established by this Legislature, then PSD suggests that this resolution be deferred and delayed to include the oversight of that proposed overall statewide authority. The Department notes that the State Sheriff Division has law enforcement duties and responsibilities limited to Oahu only based on a Memorandum of Agreement with the State Department of Transportation.

Fifth, PSD notes that SCR 130, on page 1, lines 23 – 31, states that the current Sheriff Division special operations canine unit consists of five teams. All five teams, however, are not specifically tasked to the Honolulu International Airport, other than one narcotics canine and handler that assists at the airport and one currency canine and handler that assists with federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Finally, as noted in our prior testimony on a proposed bill which sought to establish the special operations canine unit and special fund, fifty (50) permanent full-time deputy sheriff canine handler positions and canines across the State,

the cost of implementing such a program is significant. Just as an example, for two deputy sheriff positions to work a regular 8 hours a day, five days a week, PSD's normal operational plan is to estimate for three (3) deputy sheriffs to assure that both positions are covered in the event of leave by either of the deputies prompted by sick vacation, comp time, training, Family Leave, and other issues. Three deputy sheriffs for the full fiscal year would cost \$224,135. This cost estimate includes initial equipment issuance, but does not include differentials afforded by the collective bargaining agreement for canine handlers, explosive canines, and canine decoys conducting bite training, nor does it include the costs of additional training to become canine handlers.

Each canine must be purchased at an estimated cost of \$15,000. Also, each canine team must be equipped with a vehicle for transportation and care, and a sports utility vehicle is estimated at \$45,000 each. Secure kennels and training areas would need to be secured for each island, not to mention dog food, supplies, and veterinary costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony.