

SB-2184

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Debby Gatioan	County Fire Department	Support	No

Comments:

February 5, 2018

Honorable Clarence Nishihara, Chair

Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental

And Military Affairs

The State Senate

State Capitol, Room 214

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Nishihara:

Subject: Senate Bill (SB) 2184 Relating to Fire Protection

I am Robert Westerman, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Kauai Fire Department (KFD). The SFC and the KFD support SB 2184, which proposes to provide additional use of the Reduced Ignition Propensity Cigarette (RIPC) certification fees to support the SFC and its programs and activities.

The SFC was established by the Hawaii State Legislature in 1979 to replace the State Fire Marshal's office. It is comprised of the four county Fire Chiefs and administratively attached to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR). The SFC is responsible for adopting the state fire code, administering federal fire-related grants, enforcing the RIPC program, coordinating statewide fire training, and data collection. It is also in the process of adopting administrative rules to establish statewide qualifications for testing and certifying individuals who perform maintenance and testing of portable fire extinguishers, fire protection systems, and fire alarm systems.

From 1979 to 2001 the SFC did not have funding for staff and relied entirely on county personnel to accomplish its responsibilities. In 2001, the Governor directed the DLIR to allocate \$35,000 to fund the SFC's first employee. In 2011, the legislature appropriated an additional \$71,000 for the SFC to hire two additional employees. In 2014, a Program Specialist was hired to administer the RIPC despite no foreseeable budgetary increases.

The Honorable Nishihara, Chair

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Therefore, the legislature finds that the SFC would greatly benefit from additional personnel so that it may promote statewide fire and life safety activities. The purpose of this Act is to authorize the expenditure of moneys collected from the RIPC fees to fund fire and life safety programs by hiring additional personnel.

Life safety is a priority for the SFC and the KFD. The SFC and the KFD urge your committee's support on the passage of SB 2184.

Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Lloyd Rogers at 723-7176 or lrogers@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,



Robert Westerman

Fire Chief, County of Kaua'i

RFW/dag