

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA

**House Committees on Water & Land and Labor & Government Operations**

Wednesday, February 14, 2024

9:20 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 430 and Videoconference

**With Comments**

**House Bill No. 1843, Relating to Fire Protection**

Chairs Ichiyama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Garrett, and members of the House Committees on Water & Land and Labor & Government Operations:

The Office of the Governor provides the following comments on H.B. No. 1843, Relating to Fire Protection. This bill would establish the office of the state fire marshal to direct fire protection efforts statewide.

The Maui wildfire resulted in unbearable loss of lives, homes, infrastructure, and businesses. This tragic event is a wake-up call that due to climate changes, the risk of catastrophic wildfires, along with other natural disasters in Hawaii has increased.

While we support the intent of this bill to re-establish a state fire marshal, the Office of the Governor would respectfully ask that the Legislature considers House Bill No. 2409, which would also reestablish the state fire marshal's office within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. Other provisions within H.B. No. 2409 would provide the state fire marshal with among other responsibilities, reviewing and assessing the fire risk to the State and reviewing the emergency resources that are available in the State to be deployed to address fires.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 14, 2023

To: The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair,  
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Water and Land

To: The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair,  
The Honorable Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations

Date: Wednesday, February 14, 2024  
Time: 9:20 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 430, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: H.B. 1843 RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION**

Chairs Ichiyama and Matayoshi, Vice Chairs Poepoe and Takuya Garret, and Members of the House Committee on Water and Land and Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations:

The DLIR **supports the intent** to re-establish a State Fire Marshal and respectfully requests that the Legislature consider HB2409, which would also re-establish the State Fire Marshal's Office within the DLIR but allow the Governor to nominate the State Fire Marshal along with resources and responsibilities to carry out the State Fire Marshal's Office. HB2409 would allow the State Fire Marshal to review and assess the fire risk to the State and review the emergency resources that are available in the State to be deployed to address fires.

Currently, the State Fire Council is administratively attached to the department through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the DLIR and the City and County of Honolulu. The DLIR is unaware as to why the State Fire Council is administratively attached to the department.

The DLIR supports attaching the State Fire Marshall's Office to the DLIR at this time, but suggests further research and recommendations be derived for the appropriate, permanent placement of this office and this function within the Executive Branch.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 14, 2023

To: The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair,  
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair, and  
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The DLIR supports attaching the State Fire Marshall's Office to the DLIR at this time, but suggests further research and recommendations be derived for the appropriate, permanent placement of this office and this function within the Executive Branch.



STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA  
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
[www.labor.hawaii.gov](http://www.labor.hawaii.gov)

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair  
Committee on Water and Land  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 426  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Scot Matayoshi, Chair  
Committee on Labor and  
Government Relations  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 422  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Matayoshi:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 1843 Relating to Fire Protection

I am Kazuo Todd, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC). The SFC supports HB 1843, which establishes the office of the State Fire Marshal to direct fire protection efforts statewide.

The SFC was established by the Hawaii State (State) Legislature in 1979 to replace the State Fire Marshal's office. It is currently comprised of the four county Fire Chiefs, State of Hawaii, a representative from the Hawaii State Aircraft Fire Fighting Unit (ARFF), and a representative from the Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Department of Land and Natural Resources (DOFAW), and is administratively attached to the State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR).

In accordance with Hawaii Revised Statutes §132, the SFC's primary functions are to adopt a state fire code, administer the requirements for reduced ignition propensity cigarettes, and serve as a focal point for federal grants. The SFC may advise and assist the county fire departments where appropriate; prescribe standard procedures and forms related to inspections, investigations, and reporting of fires; and advise the Governor and State Legislature on issues relating to fire prevention and protection and life safety. The SFC promotes the standardization of fire service reporting, training, sharing of technology, resources, and best management practices.

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair  
The Honorable Scot Matayoshi, Chair  
Page 2  
February 8, 2024


The SFC has an office staff of 2 part-time administrative specialists and an annual budget of \$106,000 with a ten percent restriction for fiscal year (FY) 2024. In comparison, California's Office of the State Fire Marshal operates with 218.6 full-time positions and an annual budget of \$61,000,000 (FY 2023).

The re-establishment of the State Fire Marshal will create a permanent, full-time position as a first step to address fire service issues that occur statewide. This can include statewide enforcement of the fire code, for both state buildings and wildland fire areas, particularly in light of the August 2023 Lahaina Fire. The State Fire Marshal can work on statewide fire prevention programs and coordinate fire and arson investigation efforts.

This bill will allow the SFC and State Fire Marshal to more properly serve as a comprehensive fire service emergency management network for the protection of life, property, and the environment for the State. The SFC urges the committee's approval of HB 1843.

Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 723-7169 or [glum@honolulu.gov](mailto:glum@honolulu.gov).

Sincerely,

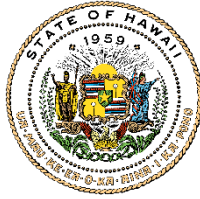


KAZUO TODD  
Chair

KT/GL

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG  
CHAIRPERSON  
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY

DEAN D. UYENO  
ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
DAWN N. S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the House Committees on  
WATER AND LAND  
and  
LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

Wednesday, February 14, 2024  
9:20 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 430 and Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1843  
RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION

House Bill 1843 proposes to establish the office of the state fire marshal to direct fire protection efforts statewide and appropriate funds. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports this measure.**

Currently, Hawai'i is the only state that lacks an official office of Fire Marshal, the position was disbanded in 1979 and the State Fire Council was established. While the State Fire Council acts as the de facto State Fire Marshal's office, there is a tremendous need to re-establish the Office of the Fire Marshal in order to increase the oversight and coordination of the State and county fire service. Currently, the State Fire Council members can only meet on a quarterly basis due to the high demand of their leadership positions within their fire service and the bulk of their work at the State Fire Council is to establish the State's fire code. A full-time State Fire Marshal's office will be able to provide critical input and oversight to the State's fire code, standardize training requirements for county fire departments, provide fire inspections to determine fire origin and cause, as well as provide and coordinate public education and awareness on fire safety. Potentially the State Fire Marshal's office could house a statewide fire aviation division that could provide aerial fire suppression resources and medical transport across the state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this measure.

Council Chair  
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair  
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore  
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers  
Tom Cook  
Gabe Johnson  
Tamara Paltin  
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez  
Shane M. Sinenci  
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services  
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services  
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

February 5, 2024

TO: The Honorable Representative Linda Ichiyama, Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Water & Land  
The Honorable Representative Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Labor & Government Operations

FROM: Alice L. Lee  
Council Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee".

SUBJECT: **HEARING OF FEBRUARY 14, 2024; TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF  
HB1843, RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure to establish the Office of the State Fire Marshal to direct statewide fire-protection efforts.

I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. This bipartisan proposal emerges following the August 8, 2023, Lahaina wildfires, as a common-sense means of providing dedicated support for statewide wildfire prevention and protection that already exists in every other state across the nation.
2. The measure is an acknowledgment that rising global temperatures increase the risk of drought conditions and decreased water with which to combat fires. The centralized coordination the Fire Marshal would provide is a health and safety priority.
3. Maui has experienced firsthand the devastating effects to life, property, safety, and security of the recent wildfires. Creating a Fire Marshal position is a reasonable and cost-effective step that can be taken to increase safeguards and protect the State's residents and visitors.

For the foregoing reasons, I **support** this measure.

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**

Mayor

**JOSIAH K. NISHITA**

Managing Director

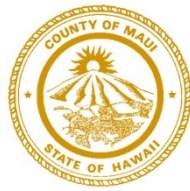
**BRADFORD K.**

**VENTURA**

Fire Chief

**GAVIN L.M. FUJIOKA**

Deputy Fire Chief



**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & PUBLIC  
SAFETY**

COUNTY OF MAUI

200 DAIRY ROAD

KAHULUI, MAUI, HAWAII 96732

[www.mauicounty.gov](http://www.mauicounty.gov)

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair  
Committee on Water and Land  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 426  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Tamas,

**SUBJECT: HOUSE BILL (HB) 1843 RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION**

I am Bradford K. Ventura, member of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Maui Fire Department. The SFC supports HB 1843 which establishes the office of the State Fire Marshal to direct fire protection efforts statewide.

The SFC was established by the Hawaii State (State) Legislature in 1979 to replace the State Fire Marshal's office. It is currently comprised of the four county Fire Chiefs, State of Hawaii, a representative from the Hawaii State Aircraft Fire Fighting Unit (ARFF), and a representative from the Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Department of Land and Natural Resources (DOFAW), and is administratively attached to the State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR).

In accordance with Hawaii Revised Statutes §132, the SFC's primary functions are to adopt a state fire code, administer the requirements for reduced ignition propensity cigarettes, and serve as a focal point for federal grants. The SFC may advise and assist the county fire departments where appropriate; prescribe standard procedures and forms related to inspections, investigations, and reporting of fires; and advise the Governor and State Legislature on issues relating to fire prevention and protection and life safety. The SFC promotes the standardization of fire service reporting, training, sharing of technology, resources, and best management practices.

The SFC has an office staff of 2 part-time administrative specialists and an annual budget of \$106,000 with a ten percent restriction for fiscal year (FY) 2024. In comparison, California's Office of the State Fire Marshal operates with 218.6 full-time positions and an annual budget of \$61,000,000 (FY 2023).

The re-establishment of the State Fire Marshal will create a permanent, full-time position as a first step to address fire service issues that occur statewide. This can include statewide enforcement of the fire code, for both state buildings and wildland fire areas, particularly in light of the August 2023



The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair  
The Honorable Scot Matayoshi, Chair  
February 8, 2024  
Page 2

Lahaina Fire. The State Fire Marshal can work on statewide fire prevention programs and coordinate fire and arson investigation efforts.

This bill will allow the SFC and State Fire Marshal to more properly serve as a comprehensive fire service emergency management network for the protection of life, property, and the environment for the State. The SFC urges the committee's approval of HB 1843.

If you have any questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at (808) 723-7169 or [glum@honolulu.gov](mailto:glum@honolulu.gov).

Sincerely,



BRADFORD K. VENTURA  
Fire Chief

**HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT  
KA 'OIHANA KINAI AHI O HONOLULU  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

636 SOUTH STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 723-7139 • FAX: (808) 723-7111 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



SHELDON K. HAO  
FIRE CHIEF  
LUNA NUI KINAI AHI

JASON SAMALA  
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF  
HOPE LUNA NUI KINAI AHI

February 8, 2024

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair  
Committee on Water and Land  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 426  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Scot Matayoshi, Chair  
Committee on Labor and  
Government Relations  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 422  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Ichiyama and Matayoshi:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 1843 Relating to Fire Protection

I am Sheldon K. Hao, Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The HFD supports HB 1843, which establishes the office of the State Fire Marshal to direct fire protection efforts statewide.

The State Fire Council (SFC) was established by the Hawaii State (State) legislature in 1979 to replace the State Fire Marshal's office. It is currently comprised of the four county Fire Chiefs and representatives from the State Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting Unit and the Department of Land and Natural Resources' Division of Forestry and Wildlife and is administratively attached to the State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

In accordance with Hawaii Revised Statutes §132, the SFC's primary functions are to adopt a state fire code, administer the requirements for reduced ignition propensity cigarettes, and serve as a focal point for federal grants. The SFC may advise and assist the county fire departments where appropriate; prescribe standard procedures and forms related to inspections, investigations, and reporting of fires; and advise the

The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair  
The Honorable Scot Matayoshi, Chair  
Page 2  
February 8, 2024

Governor and State legislature on issues relating to fire prevention and protection and life safety. The SFC promotes the standardization of fire service reporting, training, sharing of technology, resources, and best management practices.

The SFC has an office staff of two part-time administrative specialists and an annual budget of \$106,000 with a ten percent restriction for fiscal year (FY) 2024. In comparison, California's Office of the State Fire Marshal operates with 218.6 full-time positions and an annual budget of \$61,000,000 (FY 2023).

The reestablishment of the State Fire Marshal will create a permanent, full-time position as a first step to address fire service issues that occur statewide. This can include statewide enforcement of the fire code for state buildings and wildland fire areas, particularly in light of the Lahaina fire in August 2023. The State Fire Marshal can work on statewide fire prevention programs and coordinate fire and arson investigation efforts.

This bill will allow the SFC and State Fire Marshal to more properly serve as a comprehensive fire service emergency management network for the protection of life, property, and the environment for the State.

The HFD urges the committees' approval of HB 1843.

Should you have questions, please contact Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 808-723-7169 or [glum@honolulu.gov](mailto:glum@honolulu.gov).

Sincerely,

SHELDON K. HAO  
Fire Chief

SKH/GL:cn

**HB-1843**

Submitted on: 2/13/2024 12:34:56 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/14/2024 9:20:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kazuo Todd	Hawaii Fire Department	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Hawaii Fire Department is in support, but would like to offer alternative language for the duties of the State Fire Marshal position to better clarify roles and responsibilities.

(c) The duties of the state fire marshal shall include but not be limited to:

(1) Annually review and assess fire risks statewide, consider the emergency resources available for fire response, and work to address gaps in coverage. This involves coordinating fire protection efforts, facilitating interagency MOU/MOAs, and potentially assisting in grants or other funding means to help local agencies enhance the overall fire safety and response capabilities within the state.

(2) Assist and/or lead in the investigation of fires upon request from county agencies to determine cause and origin, and maintain a comprehensive record of all fires within the State, including causes and circumstances.

(3) Assist in the training and certification of fire investigators and inspectors, ensuring they possess the requisite skills and knowledge. Support local agencies with training programs and resources necessary for conducting detailed investigations, enforcing fire codes, and promoting fire safety within their jurisdictions.

(4) Coordinate with local agencies to enhance public education and awareness programs on fire safety, assessing the need for and potentially developing a comprehensive statewide public fire safety messaging program.

(5) Collaborate with the State Fire Council on fire service matters within the State.

(6) Propose amendments to the State Fire Code for consideration and adoption by the State Fire Council. The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair Page 3 February 7, 2024

(7) Conduct or arrange for inspections of state buildings and facilities for fire safety compliance.

(8) Coordinate state-level fire protection training and support the establishment of training facilities and programs, including statewide standardization of certification and training levels for firefighters.

(9) Perform additional duties as assigned or delegated by the State Fire Council.

(10) Prepare an annual report summarizing assessments and reviews conducted under subsection (c)(1) through (9). This report shall be submitted to the Governor and the State Fire Council no later than November 30 of each calendar year.

(d) In carrying out the duties of this section, the state fire marshal may utilize the services of the state fire council's ~~including its~~ advisory committee and administrative staff, as appropriate. The state fire marshal may employ, on a full-time basis, one staff person to support the state fire marshal's office."



## TESTIMONY FROM THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

### HOUSE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND and LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

FEBRUARY 14, 2024

HB 1843, RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION

POSITION: SUPPORT

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **supports** HB 1843, relating to fire protection. Pursuant to the “Public Safety and Disaster and Emergency Preparedness” section of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i platform, the party supports “policy that protects the people of Hawai'i and their property against natural and man-made disasters,” and “believes that climate change is real, affirms human activity as its primary cause and main driver, and supports emergency preparedness and planning efforts to mitigate its impacts.”

Last year, we witnessed the impact of the climate emergency on our shores. On August 8, 2023, wildfires swept across Maui and killed at least 100 people, making it one of the nation's deadliest natural disasters. The spread of the fires has been attributed to climate change conditions, such as unusually dry landscapes and the confluence of a strong high-pressure system to the north and Hurricane Dora to the south.

The wildfires destroyed over 2,200 structures, including numerous residential buildings, historic landmarks, and school facilities. In September 2023, a report from the United States Department of Commerce estimated the total economic damage of the wildfires to be roughly \$5.5 billion.

According to a report issued by the University of Hawaii Economic Research Organization on September 22, 2023, the unemployment rate on Maui was expected to soar above 11 percent by the end of 2023 and remain above 4 percent through 2026. A total of 10,448 new claims for unemployment in Maui County were filed in the four weeks following the wildfires, about 9,900 more than the preceding four weeks. Displaced families and workers who lost their jobs are still attempting to recover from the disaster, with a full recovery expected to take many years to achieve.

**Accordingly, we must do all we can to prevent tragedies like this from recurring on our shores, including by re-establishing the position of the state fire marshal to help mitigate future emergencies.** The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency released an updated State Hazard Mitigation Plan last November, in which the state's wildfire risk level soared 74 percent to 6.6 from its prior level of 3.8 in the 2018 draft of the report.

The updated hazard mitigation plan contains statistics on how many people by county are at risk from wildfire hazards. For Honolulu, 427,293 people could potentially be affected by wildfires, which was listed as the highest risk with a risk factor of 5.7. Maui County also has wildfires as its highest emergency risk with a score of 5.8 and 81,424 people at risk. On Kaua'i, wildfires carry a 5.6 risk level and threaten 27,604 people. Hawai'i Island has a wildfire risk score of 4.6 and 32,080 people at risk.

Wildfires are now designated as the top hazard in the state according to the updated HIEMA report. It is incumbent upon policymakers to respond with urgency to keep our communities safe.

Mahalo nui loa,

**Kris Coffield**  
*Co-Chair, Legislative Committee*  
(808) 679-7454  
kriscoffield@gmail.com

**Abby Simmons**  
*Co-Chair, Legislative Committee*  
(808) 352-6818  
abbyalana808@gmail.com



# MAUI

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON WATER & LAND and  
LABOR & GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 325  
Wednesday, February 14, 2024 AT 9:20 A.M.

To The Honorable Linda Ichiyama, Chair  
The Honorable Mahina Poepoe, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Water & Land  
To The Honorable Scot Z. Matayoshi, Chair  
The Honorable Rep. Andrew Takuya Garrett, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Labor & Government Operations

### COMMENTS ON HB1843 RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION

The Maui Chamber of Commerce would like to offer **COMMENTS on HB1843**.

The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports the intent of this bill and appreciates the many bills introduced this session addressing the August 8 wildfires. We note Hawaii is the only state without a state fire marshal. In 1979, the position of the state fire marshal was abolished and replaced with the state fire council. The state fire council is now composed of the fire chiefs of the four counties, the state aircraft rescue firefighting unit, and the state protections forester from the department of land and natural resources, division of forestry and wildlife. The state fire council's members serve as non-compensated volunteers as their time allows from their full-time employment. The state fire council has an office staff consisting of two part-time administrative specialists.

We note that a State Fire Marshal position is already included in SB2353, along with a corps of elite firefighters. Given that there are many bills looking to add new positions within the state, we feel it is important to see how these compare in an overall comprehensive wildfire preparedness plan and combine them, where possible.

The Chamber looks forward to continued discussions on this and other related bills to find the best possible solutions.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer **COMMENTS ON HB1843**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap  
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



**HB-1843**

Submitted on: 2/3/2024 2:48:42 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/14/2024 9:20:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Long overdue. Had we had one last August, perhaps Lahaina would still be standing.

**HB-1843**

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 1:43:18 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/14/2024 9:20:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tamara Paltin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB 1843, after the many devastating wildfires that Maui County had on 8/8/23, it shows as a state and county how vulnerable we are to this type of tragedy and that it needs to be addressed with a broader perspective.

Mahalo for your commitment to our communities,

Tamara Paltin

**HB-1843**

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 1:13:50 PM

Testimony for WAL on 2/14/2024 9:20:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Wasting Tax payer Moneys!!!!

Testimony by Dr. Clay Trauernicht IN SUPPORT of HB 1843, Relating to Fire Protection  
For the hearing on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024

To Representatives Linda Ichiyama and Mahina Poepoe, Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, of  
the Committee on Water and Land; and

Representatives Scot Matayoshi and Andrew Garret, Chair and Vice Chair, respectively, of the  
Committee on Labor and Government Operations

I am submitting testimony in support of HB 1843 which would re-establish the office of the State  
Fire Marshal. I have been working at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in the field of wildfire  
science and management since 2013 and specifically on ecosystem conservation and watershed  
protection since 2021. However, I am submitting this testimony as an individual and not as an  
official University of Hawai'i spokesperson.

The conditions that create wildfire risk have radically changed in the Hawaiian Islands since the  
State Fire Marshall position last existed in the 1970s. Much of my professional work over the  
past decade has been committed communicating just how much more dangerous and extensive  
wildfires have become beginning in the 1980s and 1990s as more and more agricultural lands  
have been abandoned. Given this new 'fire environment,' having a State Fire Marshal would  
contribute critical support and take on responsibilities that county agencies cannot coordinate at  
the state level and that extend beyond the capacity and jurisdiction of the Department of Land  
and Natural Resources.

Many of the bill's proposed tasks, including educational outreach, post-fire assessments, and  
compiling and organizing statewide fire records have fell to my own extension program and the  
Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization which have been funded almost entirely through  
federal grants. The value and need to continue this kind of work - and designating these tasks to  
a state-supported office - would be foundational for all aspects of effective fire risk reduction,  
from fuels reduction to preventing ignitions to improving emergency response.

The other duties, such as coordinated training and increased support for inspections have been  
raised by county agencies for many years as key factors that would improve their capacity. In  
addition, the language in this bill would provide the time for the Fire Marshal position to  
integrate themselves into the existing fire response community and identify the staffing needs to  
make the office effective over the long-term.

Sincerely,



Clay Trauernicht, PhD  
Extension Specialist in Ecosystems and Fire  
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**THE THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE**  
**REGULAR SESSION OF 2024**

**HB 1843**

February 14, 2024 – 9:20 am

Conference Room 430, 415 South Beretania Street

**In Support**

Aloha, my name is Kaelah Iha and I am in support of HB 1843 relating to fire protection. I am from Haiku, Maui but I am majoring in social work and attend the University of Hawaii: Manoa. I have lived on Maui for the majority of my life and have established strong bonds within the community.

The reason I am in support of adding a state fire marshal office to direct fire protection efforts statewide is due to the wildfires that happened on Maui in August of 2023. Thousands of individuals are displaced, experiencing trauma, dealing with grief, and trying to move forward. Homes, lives, businesses, and jobs were lost in the fires and I believe that creating a state fire marshal office to help regulate and communicate fire protection would benefit not only my community but others throughout the islands. By adding a state fire marshal office there will be a sense of communication where different ideas from different counties can be addressed and used to help prevent fires throughout the state. Although the state does have a fire council created in place of a fire marshal, a fire marshal would benefit the state more because that individual would only be focusing on fire protection. I am in support of HB 1843 relating to fire protection.

Kaelah Iha