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February 9, 2021

The Honorable Ryan Yamane, Chair  
Committee on Health, Human Services,  
and Homelessness  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 420  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Yamane:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 210 Relating to the Reduced Ignition Propensity  
Cigarette (RIPC) Program

I am Manuel P. Neves, Chair of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The SFC and the HFD strongly support HB 210, which authorizes the SFC to utilize RIPC Program Special Funds to pay for key statewide programs and activities that support the SFC's primary mission. It will also authorize the SFC to employ additional staff to implement and coordinate those programs.

The SFC was established by the Hawaii State (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 State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR).

In accordance with Hawaii Revised Statutes §132, the SFC's primary mission is to develop and support a comprehensive fire service emergency management network for the protection of life, property, and the environment for the State. Through the collaborative and unified efforts of each county Fire Chief, the SFC promotes the standardization of fire service reporting, training, sharing of technology, resources, and best management practices. 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, protection, and life safety.

The SFC reviews and adopts the national fire code into Hawaii's state fire code. The SFC administers federal fire-related grants; manages the RIPC Program; and coordinates statewide fire training, education, and data collection. It also oversees a statewide program for testing and certifying individuals who perform maintenance and testing of portable fire extinguishers, fire protection systems, and fire alarm systems. Between 1979 and 2001, the SFC relied entirely on county funding and personnel to accomplish its mission. In 2001, the Governor directed the DLIR to allocate \$35,000 to fund the SFC's first part-time employee. In 2011, the legislature appropriated an additional \$71,000 for the SFC to hire two additional employees.

On July 6, 2008, during the 24<sup>th</sup> Hawaii State Legislature Regular Session, Act 218 was passed, and Hawaii became the 36<sup>th</sup> state requiring only RIPC be sold in Hawaii. This law took effect on September 30, 2009. More than 700 brand/style cigarettes were certified by the SFC as being RIPC-compliant. A \$375 fee was also attached for each brand/style cigarette that was certified for sale in our state. Almost \$660,000 in RIPC certification fees were collected before an RIPC Program Specialist was hired on January 16, 2014.

Since then, a plan has been formulated and instituted to properly administer Hawaii's RIPC law. Besides paying for the RIPC Program Specialist's salary, funds from the RIPC Special Fund have been used to defray office expenses, field inspections, and random independent testing by certified laboratories.

The following chart shows the current status of the RIPC income and expenses and examples on the potential use of funds for statewide programs, training, and a new position:

Average Annual Fees Collected (2010-present)	\$129,900
Average Annual Expenses (2010-present)	\$ 65,680
Current Balance	\$780,000

Program	Current Expense	Recurring Expense
<b>Youth Fire Prevention Intervention Program (triennial)</b>	\$ 24,600	\$ 12,600
Materials, supplies, and equipment	600	600
Contract instructor	5,000	2,500
Personnel	19,000	9,500
<b>Fire Fighter's Safety Guide Program</b>	\$ 44,000	\$ 34,000
Materials and printing	32,500	32,500
Personnel	11,500	1,500
<b>SFC Grant Manage (Data Analyst) Position</b>	\$ 72,000	\$ 72,000
<b>Fire Investigator Training (triennial )</b>	\$ 8,400	\$ 8,400
Reid interview techniques	2,500	2,500
Vehicular fire investigations	2,700	2,700
International Association of Arson Investigators International Training Council	3,200	3,200
<b>Fire Code Adoption Costs and Processes (triennial )</b>		\$ 2,664
Publish public notice in Hawaii newspapers		1,800
Estimated cost of personnel to generate and edit Administrative Rules		864
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$149,000</b>	<b>\$129,664</b>

Currently, there are several programs that have been implemented by one or more of our county fire departments. Key among them is the Fire Fighter's Safety Guide, which has been in existence for more than 30 years. Each year, more than 150,000 booklets filled with fire and life safety information are distributed to elementary school children statewide. There have been several accounts where students acknowledged that information learned from the booklet helped them escape and save family members during a fire or other emergency.

Specialized training could include fire/arson investigation and youth fire setter intervention. Community education programs, such as senior fire and fall prevention, fire evacuation planning and drills, fire prevention week mural exhibition projects, and

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Smoke Alarms For Everyone, could be initiated. Many times, funding at the county-level is lacking or does not exist.

This bill will allow the SFC to fulfill its mission with existing revenue to properly support the educational programs and training for a comprehensive fire service emergency management network for the protection of life, property, and the environment for the State.

We request that the bill be amended to include an appropriation of \$150,000 for fiscal year 2021 and \$150,000 for fiscal year 2022 in addition to the current amount designated to administer the RIPC Program.

The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's support on the passage of SB 146.

Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Lloyd Rogers at 723-7176 or [lrogers@honolulu.gov](mailto:lrogers@honolulu.gov).

Sincerely,



MANUEL P. NEVES  
Chair

MPN/LR:cs