



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

March 15, 2024

To: The Honorable Henry J.C. Aquino, Chair,
The Honorable Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair, and
Members of the Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair,
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair and Members of the Senate
Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Date: Friday, March 15, 2024
Time: 3:00 p.m.
Place: Conference Room 225, State Capitol

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

**Re: H.B. 1889 H.D.1 RELATING TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION
MEDICAL BENEFITS**

I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The **DLIR supports** this proposal which amends Section 386-21.9, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to improve female firefighters' access to comprehensive medical coverage by expanding workers' compensation medical benefits for firefighters to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs.

II. CURRENT LAW

§386-21.9 states that the employer is responsible for the medical care, services, and supplies for firefighters suffering from cancer, leukemia multiple myeloma, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, or cancer of the lung, brain, stomach, esophagus, intestines, rectum, kidney, bladder, prostate, or testes.

§386-21 requires the employer is to provide to the employee so long as reasonably needed, all medical care, services and supplies as the nature of the injury requires.

III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL

The DLIR supports this measure to ensure that firefighters receive timely and appropriate medical treatment to include breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

March 15, 2024

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY, AND ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

House Bill 1889 HD1– Relating to Workers’ Compensation Medical Benefits

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1889 HD1 – Relating to Workers’ Compensation Medical Benefits.

This bill expands workers’ compensation medical benefits for firefighters to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs.

It is important that all types of cancer that are correlated to environmental hazards to which firefighters are exposed are covered.

Thank you for considering our position.

Respectfully submitted,

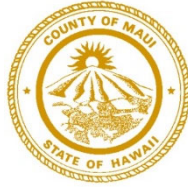
KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director

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

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
Committee on Public Safety & Intergovernmental & Military Affairs
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
Committee on Labor & Technology
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Wakai and Aquino:

SUBJECT: HOUSE BILL (HB) 1889, HOUSE DRAFT (HD) 1 RELATING TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION MEDICAL BENEFITS

I am Bradford K. Ventura, member of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of Maui Fire Department. The SFC strongly supports HB 1889, HD1, which expands workers' compensation medical benefits for firefighters to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs.

Over the last decade, the fire profession has experienced an increase in fire fighter deaths related to cancer. The University of Cincinnati and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health conducted studies as a result of the initial findings. They are the most comprehensive investigations into cancer-related diseases incurred by career fire fighters to date and support the initial findings.

A State of Hawaii (State) cancer taskforce performed an investigative study with assistance from medical insurance companies and found that fire fighters in the State are also experiencing elevated levels of exposure to the effects of cancer-related diseases, correlating Hawaii's information with the national studies.

A study published in Public Health in 2023 found that female firefighters may develop a wide variety of cancers and develop them at an earlier age than most other women. This proposed language ensures inclusion of cancers that may affect female firefighters.

There are approximately 40 female firefighters out of a total of about 2,100 active firefighters in the state. Although this is not a high percentage of the total, female firefighters deserve to be covered due to anatomical differences. If passed, this bill will provide the female firefighter and

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
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their family with the financial and moral support they require if affected. The SFC urges your committee's passage of HB 1889, HD1, for the welfare of our firefighters.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Ventura". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental
and Military Affairs
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 407
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
Committee on Labor and Technology
The State Senate
State Capitol, Room 204
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Wakai and Aquino:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 1889, House Draft (HD) 1 Relating to Workers' Compensation
Medical Benefits

I am Sheldon K. Hao, Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The HFD strongly supports HB 1889, HD 1, which expands workers' compensation medical benefits for fire fighters (FF) to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs.

Over the last decade, the fire profession has experienced an increase in FF deaths related to cancer. The University of Cincinnati and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health conducted studies as a result of the initial findings. They are the most comprehensive investigations into cancer-related diseases incurred by career FFs to date and support the initial findings.

A State of Hawaii (State) cancer taskforce performed an investigative study with assistance from medical insurance companies and found that FFs in the State are also experiencing elevated levels of exposure to the effects of cancer-related diseases, which correlates Hawaii's information with the national studies.

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
The Honorable Henry Aquino, Chair
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A study published in Public Health in 2023 found that female firefighters may develop a wide variety of cancers and develop them at an earlier age than most other women. This proposed language ensures inclusion of cancers that may affect female firefighters. There are approximately 40 female FFs out of a total of approximately 2,100 active FFs in the State. Although this is not a high percentage of the total, female FFs deserve to be covered due to anatomical differences. If passed, this bill will provide the female FFs and their family with the financial and moral support they require if affected.

The HFD urges your committees' passage of HB 1889, HD 1, for the welfare of our FFs.

Should you have questions, please contact Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 723-7169 or glum@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

SHELDON K. HAO
Fire Chief

SKH/GL:cn



INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION

LOCAL OFFICE • 451 ATKINSON DRIVE • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814 • PHONE 949-4161

HAWAII DIVISION: 100 West Lanikoula Street, Hilo, Hawaii 96720 • OAHU DIVISION: 451 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814
MAUI COUNTY DIVISION: 896 Lower Main Street, Wailuku, Hawaii 96793 • KAUAI DIVISION: 4154 Hardy Street, Lihue, Hawaii 96766
HAWAII LONGSHORE DIVISION: 451 Atkinson Drive, Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

LOCAL 142

March 13, 2024

The Thirty-Second Legislature
Regular Session of 2024

THE SENATE

Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference
Friay, March 15, 2024; 3:00 p.m.

STATEMENT OF THE ILWU LOCAL 142 ON HB1889, HD1 RELATING TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION MEDICAL BENEFITS

On behalf of the ILWU Local 142, I am writing to express our wholehearted endorsement of HB1889, a critical piece of legislation aimed at strengthening workers' compensation medical benefits for firefighters in the state of Hawai'i. Our Hawai'i firefighters are dedicated men and women who put their lives on the line to protect our communities, and our union recognizes the paramount importance of addressing the unique health challenges they face in the performance of their duties.

The research findings outlined in the bill, particularly the heightened risk of cancer among firefighters due to exposure to contaminants, underscore the necessity for legislative intervention. This commitment to understanding and mitigating the risks associated with firefighting demonstrates a shared dedication to the welfare of our frontline heroes.

It is particularly noteworthy that HB1889 recognizes and addresses the unique vulnerabilities faced by female firefighters, who may be at an elevated risk of breast, cervical, and uterine cancers. The proposed amendment to Section 386-21.9 of the Hawai'i Revised Statutes, encompassing coverage for breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs, aligns with union values around equity and inclusivity in the provision of comprehensive medical coverage.

The ILWU Local 142 urges the committee to support our firefighters by endorsing HB1889. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of **HB1889, HD1**.

Christian West
President, ILWU Local 142



HAWAII FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 1463, AFL-CIO

1018 PALM DRIVE, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814-1929

TELEPHONE (808) 949-1566 FAX: (808) 952-6003

WEBSITE: www.hawaiifirefighters.org

LATE TESTIMONY

The Senate
The Thirty-Second Legislature
Regular Session of 2024

Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs
And
Committee on Labor and Technology

March 15, 2024

H.B. No. 1889 RELATING TO WORKERS' COMPENSATION MEDICAL BENEFIT LBT/PSM,
H.D. 1 WAM

The Hawaii Fire Fighters Association (HFFA), Local 1463, IAFF, AFL-CIO represents more than 2,100 active-duty professional fire fighters throughout the State of Hawaii. The HFFA, on behalf of all our members, strongly supports H.B. No. 1889, H.D. 1, which expands workers' compensation medical benefits for firefighters to include coverage for breast cancer and cancer of the female reproductive organs.

The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) in partnership with the Cancer Firefighter Support Network (CFSN) concluded that female fire fighters have documented "increased risk of developing certain cancers and some are being diagnosed at higher rates compared to female non-fire fighters." Types of cancers and incidents found within the female fire fighter population are alarming.

According to the IAFF/CFSN, female fire fighters are at higher risk of developing cancer of the cervix, breast, thyroid, brain, and other cancers such as bladder, ovarian and melanoma. (see attached)

There are approximately forty female fire fighters through the Counties and State Airports and the exposure to carcinogens are the same as their male counterparts with potentially additional risks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and we ask the Committee to pass H.B. 1889, H.D. 1, for further action in the Senate.



Fire Fighter Cancer Awareness and Prevention



Female Fire Fighters and Cancer

Fire fighters face an elevated risk of being diagnosed with occupational cancer than the general public. This includes female fire fighters. The scientific studies that have been done have mainly centered around male fire fighters. This is due to the small percentage of female fire fighters in the workforce. Female fire fighters are being diagnosed with different cancers than their male colleagues and more research is needed to fully evaluate these differences.

Studies that have evaluated cancer risk among female fire fighters suggest that, like their male coworkers, they may be at an elevated risk for overall cancer incidence.¹ These studies also suggest that female fire fighters may be at an elevated risk for breast,¹ cervical, thyroid² and bladder cancers.¹

Reproductive cancers are also of interest because elevated incidence and mortality may be associated with exposures to endocrine-disrupting chemicals in the fire fighter population. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals could result in elevated incidence and mortality for reproductive cancers among female fire fighters as well. With the potential that these chemicals could affect female fire fighters, further research needs to be done to gain a better understanding of these health concerns.

Female fire fighters are documented having increased risk of developing certain cancers and some are being diagnosed at higher rates compared to female non-fire fighters:

- Cervical Cancer: 4 times higher risk¹
- Breast Cancer: Half of all cases^{1,3}
- Thyroid Cancer: 3 times higher risk^{2,3,4}
- Brain Cancer: 2.54 times higher risk⁴
- Bladder Cancer⁴
- Ovarian Cancer^{3,5,6}
- Melanoma: 1.68 times higher risk⁴

Some of these numbers are alarming; however, these studies have very small sample sizes due to the low number of female fire fighters in the workforce. More studies need to be done, and some are currently underway.

Sources:

1. Daniels, R. D., Kubale, T. L., Yiin, J. H., Dahm, M. M., Hales, T. R., Baris, D., . . . Pinkerton, L. E. (2014). Mortality and cancer incidence in a pooled cohort of US firefighters from San Francisco, Chicago and Philadelphia (1950-2009). *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 71(6), 388-97. doi:10.1136/oemed-2013-101662
2. Ma, F., Fleming, L. E., Lee, D. J., Trapido, E., & Gerace, T. A. (2006). Cancer incidence in Florida professional firefighters, 1981 to 1999. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 48(9), 883-88.
3. Ma, F., Fleming, L. E., Lee, D. J., Trapido, E., Gerace, T. A., Lai, H., & Lai, S. (2005). Mortality in Florida professional firefighters, 1972 to 1999. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 47(6), 509-17.
4. Lee DJ, Koru-Sengul T, Hernandez MN, Caban-Martinez AJ, McClure LA, Mackinnon JA, Kobetz EN. Cancer risk among career male and female Florida firefighters: Evidence from the Florida Firefighter Cancer Registry (1981-2014). *Am J Ind Med*. 2020 Apr;63(4):285-299. doi: 10.1002/ajim.23086. Epub 2020 Jan 12. PMID: 31930542.
5. U.S. Fire Administration (USFA). March 2019. Emerging Health and Safety Issues Among Women in the Fire Service. https://www.usfa.fema.gov/downloads/pdf/publications/emerging_health_safety_issues_women_fire_service.pdf
6. Maronpot RR. Ovarian toxicity and carcinogenicity in eight recent National Toxicology Program studies. *Environ Health Perspect*. 1987 Aug;73:125-30. doi: 10.1289/ehp.8773125. PMID: 3665857; PMCID: PMC1474570.