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February 25, 2023

The Honorable Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Committee on Finance
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 306
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Yamashita:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 143, House Draft (HD) 1 Relating to the Reduced Ignition
Propensity Cigarette (RIPC) Program

I am Kazuo Todd, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC). The SFC supports HB 143, HD 1, which authorizes additional uses for and appropriates moneys in the RIPC program special fund to support the SFC and its programs and activities.

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 and protection and life safety.

On July 6, 2008, during the 24th Hawaii State Legislature Regular Session, Act 218 was passed, and Hawaii became the 36th 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 has 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 (2015-present)	\$129,900
Average Annual Expenses (2015-present)	\$124,000
Beginning Balance FY23	\$885,000

Program	Current Expense	Recurring Expense
Youth Fire Prevention Intervention Program (triennial)	\$ 24,600	\$ 4,000
Materials, supplies, and equipment	600	600
Contract instructor	5,000	2,500
Personnel	19,000	9,500
Fire Fighter's Safety Guide Program	44,000	44,000
Materials and printing	32,500	32,500
Personnel	11,500	1,500
SFC Data Analyst	72,000	72,000
Fire Investigator Training (triennial)	8,400	2,800
Reid interview techniques	2,500	833
Vehicular fire investigations	2,700	900
International Association of Arson Investigators International Training Council	3,200	1,067
Grand Total	\$149,000	\$123,000

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.

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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 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. The SFC urges the committee's approval of HB 143, HD 1.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kazuo Todd", written in a cursive style.

KAZUO TODD
Chair

KT/GL