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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai

715 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2193

RELATING TO FIREWORKS

Before the House Committee on Finance

Thursday, February 22, 2024; 11:30 a.m.

State Capitol Conference Room 308, Via Videoconference

Testifiers: Michael Vincent or Jared Redulla

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) **strongly supports**, House Bill 2193 with a recommended revision.

Act 67, Session Laws of Hawai'i, 2023, established the Illegal Fireworks Task Force to ". . . plan, coordinate, and engage in law enforcement operations to interdict illegal fireworks; develop a comprehensive strategic plan to stop the importation of illegal fireworks and explosives into Hawaii; promote compliance with the state fireworks control laws; and ensure the safety and security of the airports, harbors, and other facilities and institutions in the State against the discharge of illegal fireworks and explosives."

The Illegal Fireworks Task Force has been operational for a very short time, but following the organization of the partner agencies, appropriate training, and law enforcement operations, almost 200,000 pounds of illegal fireworks have been taken off the streets of Hawaii and operations and investigations continue. This bill establishes a series of provisions to address some of the weaknesses identified by the Illegal Fireworks Task Force which include requirements for licensing, recording, and reporting of fireworks related commodities; inspection and disposal authorities for state and

county agencies; and a mechanism to recover costs associated with the storage and disposal from those responsible for any illegal fireworks confiscated by authorities.

The appropriation is crucial for the Illegal Fireworks Task Force to continue to successfully operate. The appropriation is necessary for the hiring of necessary administrative support staff for the Task Force, operation of the Task Force, and reimbursement of funds to law enforcement agencies for Task Force-related law enforcement operations, including law enforcement personnel, overtime and other salary-related payments, charges for fuel, equipment, and storage and disposal of confiscated fireworks.

DLE requests \$1,200,000 is the amount of the needed appropriation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

TESTIMONY OF
LARRY S VERAY
TO THE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2193 HD1
RELATED TO FIREWORKS

FEBRUARY 20, 2024

Aloha, Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Committee members. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of HB2193 HD1, a very important House Bill that could positively impact hundreds of families who live in communities and residential areas where illegal fireworks are being stored. I am Larry Veray, Chair for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21; I am submitting this testimony representing our board as a whole and the numerous residents who live in Pearl City.

We desperately require law enforcement to detect, interdict, locate and make arrests on individuals who are involved in organized crime making millions of dollars on shipments of illegal fireworks arriving in Hawaii all year around in Trojan Horse shipping containers. After these illegal fireworks are arriving in Hawaii, the distribution individuals move the fireworks to covert locations where they make their sales. Regretfully, many of these storage areas are in residential areas. I am very concerned that it is only a matter of time where an entire neighborhood could experience loss of life from an accidental garage or warehouse explosion.

Our Hawaii Law Enforcement Fireworks Task Force requires the necessary funding to make an impact on countering illegal fireworks from being shipped to Hawaii and a means to destroy them while holding the bad actors accountable for those funds expended by enforcement.

Please pass HB2193 HD1. Mahalo!

Larry S. Veray



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

2700 Waiialae Avenue Honolulu, Hawaii 96826
808.356.2200 • HawaiianHumane.org

Date: Feb. 20, 2024

To: Chair Rep. Kyle Yamashita
Vice Chair Lisa Kitagawa
and Members of the Committee on Finance

Submitted By: Stephanie Kendrick, Director of Community Engagement
Hawaiian Humane Society, 808-356-2217

RE: Testimony with support for HB 2193, HD1: Relating to Fireworks
Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024, 11:30 a.m., Room 308 and Via Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for House Bill 2193, HD1, which authorizes law enforcement and fire officers to enter and inspect any licensee's or permittee's premises, under certain conditions, to verify compliance with the State's Fireworks Control Law; establishes procedures for the Department of Law Enforcement to conduct administrative inspections of controlled premises; requires certain licensees and permittees to keep records and maintain inventories; requires licensees and permittees to report any stolen fireworks or articles pyrotechnic; authorizes a law enforcement agency or county fire department to safely dispose confiscated fireworks and articles pyrotechnic; requires violators to be held liable for storage and disposal costs; specifies that each type of prohibited firework constitutes a separate violation; authorizes the Department of Law Enforcement, in addition to the counties, to enforce the Fireworks Control Law; and appropriates funds.

Hawaiian Humane has lobbied for increased protections from illegal fireworks for years, finally seeing progress with the passage of Act 67 by this body in 2023. In just a year, the Illegal Fireworks Task Force has succeeded in keeping more than 75 tons of destructive material off the local black market. That is the equivalent of nearly four full shipping containers worth of dangerous explosives.

We commend the resolve of law enforcement to interdict illegal fireworks and prevent the bombardment of our neighborhoods by illegal explosives. We support the tools offered by HB 2193, HD1, toward advancing that work. Please pass this measure with appropriate funding. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2193-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 10:32:17 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It appears the deck is stacked against law enforcement and the people. This bill is an important tool in combatting illegal fireworks. Please pass.

HB-2193-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 1:12:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Samuel M Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2193 Hd1 because the fireworks tasks force needs to be better funded.

HB-2193-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 1:28:57 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lois Crozer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill looks like it is comprehensive and really should help the out-of-control illegal use of fireworks and bombs. It's about time! Please do not fall for the line that it's cultural, it's not. And now there is the added option of light shows instead.

HB-2193-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 3:03:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lynn Murakami Akatsuka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I **strongly support** the passage of HB 2193, HD 1 to amend the State's Fireworks Control Law to strengthen the enforcement, penalties, and the violators' responsibilities which includes costs of the storage and disposal of the illegal fireworks. I fully support the Department of Law Enforcement's proposed HD 1 that is incorporated into this version of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in **strong support** of HB 2193, HD 1.

HB-2193-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 3:17:19 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Otaguro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of HB2193 and ask that more funding be made available for this important issue.

HB-2193-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 3:21:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ann S Freed	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair and members,

Please pass this bill out of committee. We are all being endangered by those who perpetrate the use of illegal fireworks.

Mahalo,

Ann S Freed

Mililani

HB-2193-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 4:58:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need tougher regulations on fireworks. This is a good start. Please support this bill. Mahalo.

HB-2193-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 7:29:55 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beverly Heiser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members,

I am in Strong Support of Bill HB 2193 HD1. I agree that additional provisions are needed.

Allowing officers to search without warrant, the premises of suspected licencees and permittees, should further help to reduce the amount of illegal fireworks. Monitoring inventories and bookkeeping is also important to ensure compliance. Any indictments that result will also send a strong message to others.

I am thankful that Bill SB 821 SD1 HD2 CD1 was passed in 2023 to establish the Illegal Fireworks Task Force within the Department of Law Enforcement. Taking effect in July, 2023, I was impressed that three containers of illegal fireworks were seized at the ports during the month of December in such a short time. Add to this, a recent seizure of 200,000 pounds of professional grade fireworks occurred on 2/15/24. This indicates the flow of illegal fireworks coming in not just for holidays, but throughout the year.

The amount of illegal fireworks this past New Year's Eve indicates the magnitude of the problem and the need to continue funding this multi-agency task force capable of handing what may be linked to criminal networks or organizations. I have read the 2024 report submitted to the Legislature by Director Jordan Lowe and am pleased with the results. I am grateful for the updates to the public on the illegal fireworks seized, and what is forthcoming. For the first time in years we finally get to see some headway made thanks to the hard work of all the agencies involved.

Please support Bill HB 2193 that can further enhance the Department of Law Enforcement's and the Illegal Fireworks Task Force's efforts to reduce the amount of Illegal Fireworks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-2193-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2024 9:41:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/22/2024 11:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorna Holmes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this legislation, and any legislation which will reduce the availability of fireworks. It's like living in a war zone sometimes, and no one needs that.