

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



STEPHEN F. LOGAN  
MAJOR GENERAL  
ADJUTANT GENERAL  
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

PHILLIP L. MALLORY  
BRIGADIER GENERAL  
DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL  
KA HOPE 'AKUKANA KENELALA

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA**  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
3949 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD  
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4495

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 1064  
RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

BY

MAJOR GENERAL STEPHEN F. LOGAN  
ADJUTANT GENERAL

JANUARY 28, 2025

Aloha Chair Belatti, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, and members of the committee:

I am Major General Stephen Logan, Adjutant General, State of Hawaii, Department of Defense.

The Department of Defense provides written testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB1064.

This measure adds twenty-nine new sections to chapter 132, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS); adds a new section to part IV of chapter 193, HRS; and amends sections 26-21, 76-16(b), 107-26, 132-1, 132-2, 132-3, 132-4, 132-4.5, 132-5, 132-6, 132-9, 132-10, 132-11, 132-12, 132-13, 132-16, 132-18(c), 170-28, 185-4(a), 291C-1, HRS, and section 2 of Act 209, Session Laws of Hawaii 2024. The purpose of this bill is to amend the laws concerning the Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) to best effectuate the recommendations of the "Phase 3" Forward-Looking Report by Fire Safety Research Institution on the August 2023 Maui wildfires.

In the aftermath of the August 2023 Lahaina wildfires, the Department of the Attorney General initiated an investigation and retained the independent, third-party Fire Safety Research Institute, part of UL Research Institutes, to assess the performance of state and county agencies in preparing for and responding to the August 2023 Maui wildfires.

The investigation led to three reports — a "Phase 1" Comprehensive Timeline report, a "Phase 2" Incident Analysis Report, and a "Phase 3" Forward-Looking Report.

The "Phase 3" Forward-Looking Report organized these findings and provided a prioritized list of action items for the State and all counties for changes to be made to improve Hawaii's response to wildfires. The report calls for changes and improvements to the OSFM, which was established by Act 209, Session Laws of Hawaii 2024. Changes included bolstering the statutory authority of the OSFM to address the wide spectrum of fire safety issues and delineating responsibilities and reporting structures between the State Fire Marshal and the State Fire Council; creating an organizational structure to immediately address the State's fire-safety priorities effectively; and substantially increasing the budget for the staffing of the OSFM.

This bill will align the OSFM's mission and responsibilities under the Department of Defense. The State Fire Marshal is currently located in the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR). DLIR's focus on labor related issues is distinctly different from disaster preparedness and emergency response. The Department of Defense mission aligns with disaster readiness, response coordination and public safety making it a more appropriate location for fire protection and emergency management functions. It further co-locates the State Fire Council (SFC) and the OSFM.

This bill seeks to improve consistency with National Best Practices, such as those of California, Florida and New York, which all house their oversight of fire safety under their emergency management or emergency services divisions. Additionally, it will enhance resource allocation and administrative synergy. The Department of Defense already provides logistical and administrative support for emergency response entities, allowing the SFC and OSFM to leverage existing infrastructure.

The one concern the department has at this time is relative lack of experience and technical expertise in fire management until the OSFM organizational structure is established.

Wildfires are a growing threat and Hawaii's vulnerability to wildfires, as seen in recent events, necessitates a change. Passage of this bill would clarify the role of the State Fire Marshal and facilitate unity of effort with the State Fire Council thereby increasing the readiness and resilience of the State against fire related disasters.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

MG Stephen F. Logan, [Stephen.f.logan@hawaii.gov](mailto:Stephen.f.logan@hawaii.gov); 808-672-1001



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

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

**House Committee on Public Safety**

Wednesday, January 29, 2025

10:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 and Videoconference

**In Support**

**H.B. No. 1064 Relating to Fire Protection**

Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and members of the House Committee on Public Safety.

The Office of the Governor strongly supports H.B.1064, Relating to Fire Protection. This bill amends the laws concerning the Office of the State Fire Marshal to best effectuate the recommendations of the "Phase 3" Forward-Looking Report by Fire Safety Research Institute on the August 2023 Maui wildfires.

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.

Currently, the State Fire Council is administratively attached to the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR). However, the evolving nature of fire-related emergencies, including wildfires and other large-scale incidents, necessitates a more integrated approach with the state's emergency management and response infrastructure. The Department of Defense (DOD), which encompasses the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, is better positioned to provide the necessary support and coordination for statewide fire prevention and response efforts.

**Specific Reasons for the Proposed Transfer:**

1. **Enhanced Emergency Coordination:** The DOD's existing role in disaster preparedness and response aligns seamlessly with the objectives of the State Fire Marshal and State Fire Council. This alignment will facilitate more efficient mobilization of resources during fire emergencies.
2. **Improved Resource Allocation:** Integrating fire mitigation and coordinated services within the DOD allows for better allocation of federal and state resources, ensuring that fire prevention and response initiatives are adequately funded and supported.

3. **Streamlined Communication:** Housing the State Fire Marshal and State Fire Council within the DOD will enhance communication channels among various emergency response agencies, leading to more cohesive and effective operations during crises.

#### **Additional Provisions in HB 1064:**

- **Establishment of the Office of the State Fire Marshal:** The bill proposes the transfer of the Office of the State Fire Marshal to the DOD. The State Fire Marshal, appointed by the State Fire Council for a five-year term, will oversee statewide fire protection efforts, including coordinating with local agencies, reviewing fire risks, and conducting inspections of state buildings.
- **Duties of the State Fire Marshal:** The State Fire Marshal's responsibilities will encompass a broad range of activities aimed at enhancing fire safety, such as:
  - Coordinating fire protection efforts between local agencies.
  - Working with the State Fire Council on matters related to fire services.
  - Reviewing and proposing amendments to the state fire code.
  - Conducting inspections of state buildings to ensure fire safety compliance.
  - Providing public education and awareness on fire safety.

#### **Amendments to the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS):**

- **Amendment to HRS §132-16:** The bill proposes amending HRS §132-16 to reflect the transfer of the State Fire Council to the DOD for administrative purposes. This change aligns the council's administrative support with its operational needs in fire prevention and response.
- **Addition of New Section (§132-NEW):** A new section is proposed to establish the Office of the State Fire Marshal within the DOD, detailing the appointment process, qualifications, and duties of the State Fire Marshal.

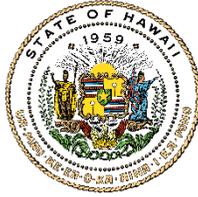
The proposed transfer of the State Fire Marshal and State Fire Council to the Department of Defense represents a strategic enhancement of Hawaii's fire protection and emergency response capabilities. By aligning these entities with the state's primary emergency management agency, we can ensure a more coordinated, efficient, and effective approach to safeguarding our communities from fire-related hazards.

I respectfully urge the committee to pass HB 1064 to strengthen our state's fire protection framework.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'  
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

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE  
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  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
and  
WATER & LAND

Wednesday, January 29, 2025  
10:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 411, and Via Videoconference

In consideration of  
HOUSE BILL 1064  
RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION

House Bill 1064 proposes amending the laws concerning the Office of the State Fire Marshal to best implement the recommendations of the "Phase 3" Forward-Looking Report prepared by the Fire Safety Research Institute regarding the August 2023 Maui wildfires. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources provides the following comments on this measure.**

The Department appreciates the intent of this measure, which defines and expands the roles of the State Fire Marshal and redefines the roles of the State Fire Council. By combining the Fire Marshal's enforcement power with the State Fire Council's advisory expertise, Hawai'i will establish a more proactive and effective fire safety framework that aligns with national best practices.

The Department suggests that the Legislature consult the State Fire Council to determine the optimal departmental placement for the Marshal and Council to best serve the state regarding fire prevention and suppression.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony and comment on this measure.



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

January 29, 2025

To: The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair,  
The Honorable Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Public Safety

The Honorable Mark Hashem, Chair,  
The Honorable Rachel F. Lamasao, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the House Committee on Water and Land

Date: Wednesday, January 29, 2025  
Time: 10:30 a.m.  
Place: Conference Room 411, State Capitol

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

**Re: H.B. 1064, RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION.**

**I. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

The **DLIR strongly supports** this proposal to effectuate the recommendations of the "Phase 3" forward-looking report and transfers the Office of State Fire Marshal and the State Fire Council from the DLIR to the Department of Defense.

**II. CURRENT LAW**

§132- established the state fire council and office of the state fire marshal within the department of labor and industrial relations.

**III. COMMENTS ON THE HOUSE BILL**

The DLIR believes the public safety of Hawaii's people will be better served and protected by the permanent placement of the State Fire Council and State Fire Marshal to the Department of Defense.



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  
830 PUNCHBOWL STREET, ROOM 321  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
[www.labor.hawaii.gov](http://www.labor.hawaii.gov)

January 28, 2025

The Honorable Della Au Belatti, Chair  
Committee on Public Safety  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 420  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Mark Hashem, Chair  
Committee on Water and Land  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 424  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Au Belatti and Hashem:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 1064, Relating to Fire Protection

I am Kazuo Todd, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC). The SFC offers comments on HB 1064, which amends the laws concerning the Office of the State Fire Marshal to best effectuate the recommendations of the "Phase 3" Forward-Looking Report by Fire Safety Research Institute on the August 2023 Maui wildfires.

The SFC has not had an opportunity to fully review, discuss, and understand all the potential impacts of the 63-page HB 1064 after it was introduced to the legislature on January 23, 2025. Upon initial read, we find many areas that seem beneficial, and other areas that are a bit concerning. This is partially due to the requirements in Chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes, which the SFC must follow to meet and make decisions. The SFC looks forward to collaboration with the legislature and the bill's authors to examine and discuss details of HB 1064 in the future as this bill moves forward.

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

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kazuo Todd.

KAZUO TODD  
Chair

KT/GL

## Testimony on House Bill 1064 (Comments Only)

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Pickett, and I am the Co-Executive Director of the Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on **House Bill 1064, *Relating to the Establishment of an Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM)***. For 25 years, we have served as Hawaii's hub of wildfire research, planning, mitigation, education, and preparedness programs. ([Hawaiiwildfire.org](http://Hawaiiwildfire.org))

We appreciate the intent behind this bill and recognize the urgent need for a well-structured and effective OSFM in Hawai'i. Because we know how critical it is to get this right for the safety of Hawai'i's people and places, we have conducted a deep dive into best practices and are providing this information for your consideration.

With representatives of the Hawai'i Office of Attorney General, and the Fire Safety Research Institute, HWMO undertook a thorough examination of OSFM models from Oregon and Colorado—states that share key similarities with Hawai'i in balancing state oversight with county authority and addressing high fire risk. Through discussions with their leadership, legal experts, and nation-wide fire research, codes, and policy experts, we gathered valuable insights into what is essential for a functional OSFM and key pitfalls to avoid.

We want to ensure the Committee has all the real information and facts. While HB 1064 states that it aligns with FSRI recommendations, our review indicates that it does not accurately reflect those findings. We want to bring this to your attention, along with the key areas we identified as critical for success:

- **Authority Structure & Departmental Positioning:** The bill does not grant the OSFM the independence and authority needed to lead a statewide fire management and safety system. Additionally, it should be housed in a department with expertise in fire management, land stewardship, and community resilience to support integrated, system-wide solutions.
- **Exclusion of Wildfire:** Wildfire is an escalating risk in Hawai'i, yet the bill does not explicitly include wildfire in the OSFM's scope.
- **Absence of Fire Data Collection & Management:** Without a structured fire data system, risk assessment, strategic resource allocation, and federal funding eligibility will be significantly hindered.
- **Lack of Public Preparedness & Prevention Measures:** Public education and preparedness programming is a core function of successful OSFM models and is essential for reducing fire risk, yet it is not addressed in this bill.
- **Deviations from Established Best Practices:** Modifications to the bill have moved it further away from the structures that have proven effective in other states. The bill, as currently written, goes against best practice. There are 49 other states to learn from- we consider it a responsibility to do so.

Following this testimony, **we have provided a briefing** that summarizes the key insights we gathered from experts in other states, including their identified watchouts and essential elements for a successful OSFM. We hope this information assists in shaping an OSFM that truly meets Hawai'i's needs.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Please contact us at any time for more information.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Pickett

Co-Executive Director, Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization

# Office of State Fire Marshal

## Getting it Right in Hawai'i: Lessons from Oregon and Colorado State Fire Marshals

A briefing developed by Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization – January 2024

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### Background and Purpose

The Hawai'i Wildfire Management Organization (HWMO) recently met with State Fire Marshals (SFM) from Oregon and Colorado to learn from their experiences, successes, and challenges in building and operating effective SFM offices. These states were chosen for their similarities to Hawai'i, including balancing state-level approaches with county home-rule, and developing a successful Office of State Fire Marshal (OSFM) that addresses high fire risk across states of complex environmental, economic, and social composition. Discussions included the State Fire Marshals, members of their leadership personnel, attorneys from the Hawai'i Office of the Attorney General, and experts from the Fire Safety Research Institute. These conversations yielded invaluable insights into establishing a functional and impactful OSFM, including laws and statutes from their states that could serve as models for Hawai'i.

HWMO often conducts background research to support our partners by providing additional resources that enhance their capacity and inform their roles. This briefing document represents one such effort. It summarizes the key recommendations and findings from those discussions, highlighting critical factors to ensure Hawai'i's OSFM is built for success. We share these insights to support decision-makers in laying the foundation for a safer, more resilient state.

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### The Risk is Real, Urgent, and Escalating

#### Why We Need to Get This Right In the Current Legislative Session

- **Rising Risks and Urgency:** Wildfire and fire risks in Hawai'i are escalating due to climate change, land-use patterns, and systemic underpreparedness. The devastating fires we've seen are not anomalies—they are a warning that we need to act now to prevent future disasters. Delaying action will only exacerbate these challenges.
  - **Building on Momentum:** The devastating impacts of recent fires- from fireworks to wildfires, have heightened public and political awareness. This is a critical moment to capitalize on that momentum and drive meaningful change.
  - **Safeguarding Communities and Resources:** Immediate legislative action is essential to establish the OSFM, providing the authority and structure needed to protect lives, homes, infrastructure, and natural resources statewide.
- 

### Overall Strategic Build-Out: Core Elements for Success and Sustainability

- **Clear Vision and Authority:** Align the OSFM's purpose and mandates with the Governor's and public expectations for statewide safety, supported by statutory authority and direct reporting to the Governor.
- **Sustainable Funding and Staffing:** Secure dedicated funding sources (e.g., tourism taxes) and assemble a leadership team, including a State Fire Marshal, regional deputies, and specialists in investigation, wildfire, codes, training, and education.
- **Statewide Programs and Consistency:** Implement initiatives like standardized training, Hawai'i-specific wildfire mitigation programs, and mutual aid systems to ensure consistency and effectiveness across the state.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Establish an advisory board of fire chiefs, state agencies, experts, and community representatives to unify efforts and guide priorities.

- **Technology and Standards:** Develop a centralized system for incident reporting and enforce statewide fire codes. Integrate land-use planning with prevention, mitigation, and recovery efforts supported by legislation and incentives (e.g. tax incentives for retrofitting or fire mitigation actions).
  - **Data, Tracking Trends, and Mapping:** Maintain a structured fire data system for tracking trends, mapping high-risk areas, and conducting risk assessments. This supports strategic resource allocation, guides targeted codes and programs, and strengthens federal funding eligibility.
- 

## Key Component 1: Statutory Authority

**Statewide Authority:** The OSFM must function as a centralized authority, independent of local jurisdictions but in close collaboration with county and state fire and emergency departments. Centralized oversight is essential to address systemic risks and ensure consistency across all islands.

**Governor's Oversight:** Reporting directly to the Governor's Office provides the OSFM with the executive support needed to fulfill its statewide mandate, oversight, and coordination.

### *Why Statewide Authority Matters*

- **Consistency in Standards:** Ensures uniform application of fire and building codes, wildfire mitigation standards, and coordination among government and private sectors.
  - **Enhanced Accountability and Coordination:** Aligns the OSFM with statewide safety goals and ensures transparent tracking of progress. Acts as a unifying body to link and coordinate efforts across public and private sectors, state and county agencies, and diverse stakeholders involved or impacted by OSFM initiatives. Bridges gaps between preparedness, response, and recovery efforts.
  - **Multi-sector Collaboration:** Works closely with county fire departments, leveraging their expertise while maintaining statewide cohesion and a unified approach to fire safety and wildfire mitigation.
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## Key Component 2: Advisory Board Formation

- **Immediate Action:** Establish a State Fire Marshal Advisory Board as a low-cost, high-impact step to guide the OSFM's vision and strategic priorities over the next 3-5 years. Collaborate carefully with counties and agencies to define roles, avoid conflicts, and ensure seamless implementation, without unduly threatening the authority and efficacy of the OSFM.
  - **Unified Collaboration:** Include county fire chiefs, local governments, policymakers, subject matter experts, and industry representatives to align statewide efforts and priorities and reduce litigation and resistance.
  - **Supportive Role:** The Advisory Board will pre-vet OSFM initiatives, ensuring smoother implementation and stronger stakeholder backing.
  - **Proactive Outreach:** Focus on educating the public and aligning legislative expectations to build understanding and support for OSFM initiatives.
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## Key Component 3: Comprehensive Fire Safety System (Integrated Systems Approach)

- **Integrated Solutions Across Systems:** The OSFM's is designed to address the interconnected challenges of wildfire and fire safety, from land-use planning and building standards to climate adaptation and resource management, ensuring all components work together to meet statewide safety needs.
- **Targeted Programs for Specific Needs:** The OSFM implements direct programs like statewide training, wildfire mitigation, defensible space initiatives, and WUI codes, combining technical expertise and enforcement to address specific safety gaps effectively.



# Hawai'i Climate Advisory Team

To: Representative Della Au Belatti, Chair  
Representative Kim Coco Iwamoto, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Public Safety

Representative Mark Hashem, Chair  
Representative Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair  
House Committee on Water & Land

From: The Climate Advisory Team

RE: **HB1064 - Relating to Fire Protection - In Support**  
Wednesday, January 29, 10:30 a.m.; Conference Room 411 & Videoconference

Aloha Chairs Au Belatti and Hashem, Vice Chairs Coco Iwamoto and Lamosao, and Members of the Committees on Public Safety and Water & Land,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify **in support** of HB1064 relating to fire protection. We, the undersigned representatives of the Governor's Climate Advisory Team, believe this bill is critically needed to support the Office of the State Fire Marshal in fulfilling its mission of protecting Hawai'i's residents and improving how the state responds to wildfires.

The devastating 2023 Maui wildfires exposed significant vulnerabilities and inadequacies in our state's ability to prepare for and respond to wildfires. One of our greatest vulnerabilities is that the state does not have a State Fire Marshal. While the Legislature created a fire marshal position in 2024, as of this writing, that person has not yet been hired and does not have any staff, budget, or an office. Establishing a fully functional Hawai'i State Fire Marshal Office was named the second highest priority in the Fire Safety Research Institute's (FSRI) "Phase 3" forward-looking report of actions to improve Hawai'i's response to wildfires.

The magnitude of work required by the Office of the State Fire Marshal cannot be overstated. This office must be supported, expanded, and appropriately resourced to ensure its stability and efficacy. These bills would appropriately clarify the role of the Office of the State Fire Marshal, bolster its ability to address fire safety issues across the state, and improve the organizational structure of the Office of the State Fire Marshal by situating it within the Department of Defense.

The CAT underscores the urgent need for more funding for the Office of the State Fire Marshal. The amount currently allocated for the office is \$172,000; the CAT recommends annual funding of at least \$2 million for the office. The annual funding for the state fire marshal position and the staffed office



# Hawai'i Climate Advisory Team

should be increased substantially in the 2025 legislative session with appropriate long-term funding commitments made. These steps are necessary to fully execute the recommendations made by FSRI and the attorney general and to ensure our state is better equipped to respond to wildfires. Please see [Section 3.2.3 of our Policy Recommendation on Climate Disaster Resilience, Recovery and Funding](#) for more information.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee in support of HB1064.

With aloha,

The Climate Advisory Team



Testimony of **Lahaina Strong**  
Before the House Committee on  
**Public Safety**

In Consideration of House Bill No. 1064  
RELATING TO FIRE PROTECTION

To Chair Belatti, Vice Chair Iwamoto, and the honorable members of the committee,

We are writing on behalf of Lahaina Strong, an organization deeply rooted in our community's resilience and advocacy. Originally formed in 2018 following the Hurricane Lane fire in Lahaina and revitalized after the devastating fires of August 8, 2023, Lahaina Strong has become the largest grassroots, Lahaina-based community organization, with over 20,000 supporters. Our mission is to amplify local voices and champion community-driven solutions, which are more critical than ever as we continue rebuilding and recovering.

Lahaina Strong, stands in **full support of House Bill 1064**, which builds on the progress made with the establishment of the State Fire Marshal position last year. This bill is essential for outlining the duties and staff responsibilities necessary to ensure the office is effective in preventing and mitigating wildfires statewide.

This measure addresses critical gaps in fire protection and coordination. It reflects many of the concerns raised since the tragedy and represents a meaningful step toward ensuring that communities across Hawai'i are better protected. We fully **support House Bill 1064** and are committed to ensuring that what happened in Lahaina never happens elsewhere in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Lahaina Strong

**HB-1064**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:28:55 AM

Testimony for PBS on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

| Submitted By    | Organization                          | Testifier Position | Testify           |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Matthew Chalker | Wildfire Safety Advocates of Waikoloa | Support            | Remotely Via Zoom |

Comments:

**Testimony in Support of HB1064 Submitted by Matt Chalker  
Wildfire Safety Advocates of Waikōloa**

**Aloha Chair Au Bellati, Chair Hashem, Vice-Chair Iwamoto, Vice-Chair Lamosao and  
Members of the Committee,**

My name is Matt Chalker, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Wildfire Safety Advocates of Waikōloa, a community-based organization dedicated to reducing wildfire risk and improving wildfire safety across Hawaii Island. We strongly support HB1064, a measure that represents a significant step forward in addressing the growing wildfire threats facing our state.

**HB1064: Strengthening the Office of the State Fire Marshal**

HB1064 seeks to enhance the authority, capabilities, and structure of the Office of the State Fire Marshal, ensuring a more coordinated and effective approach to fire prevention and wildfire readiness statewide. Key provisions we strongly support include:

- **Statewide Coordination and Standards:** By centralizing authority and establishing minimum fire safety standards, HB1064 ensures consistency while allowing counties to adopt stricter measures tailored to their unique needs. This approach is essential to address areas like Waikōloa Village, where invasive vegetation and dangerous utility lines exacerbate wildfire risks.
- **Defensible Space Requirements:** Creating statewide defensible space regulations will empower homeowners and communities to take proactive measures to mitigate fire hazards. These efforts are vital in reducing fire intensity and improving safety for first responders.
- **Data-Driven Policies:** The requirement for regular statistical reporting on fire risks and responses will enable evidence-based decision-making, ensuring resources are allocated effectively and efficiently.

**The Case for Immediate Action**

Hawaii is facing escalating wildfire risks due to invasive grasses, prolonged droughts, and aging infrastructure. The devastating Lāhainā wildfires are a tragic reminder of what can happen when fire safety measures fall short. Notably, the second Attorney General’s report specifically cites

Waikōloa Village as having an even greater risk of wildfire than Lāhainā. Waikōloa Village has also been highlighted as having some of the state's most dangerous utility lines from a wildfire perspective. Hawaiian Electric's data shows that mitigating these lines is not only essential but also cost-effective, offering a clear opportunity for impactful action.

HB1064 provides the framework necessary to address these risks comprehensively. By equipping the Office of the State Fire Marshal with the tools and authority needed to lead wildfire prevention efforts, this bill ensures that Hawaii can take meaningful steps to protect lives, property, and natural resources.

## **Conclusion**

We respectfully urge this committee to pass HB1064 with the funding and support necessary to implement it effectively. The Wildfire Safety Advocates of Waikōloa are committed to collaborating with state and local partners to build a safer and more resilient Hawaii. Together, we can prevent future tragedies and create a legacy of safety for our keiki and future generations.

Mahalo for your time and consideration of this critical issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

**Matt Chalker**

Wildfire Safety Advocates of Waikōloa

**HB-1064**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 9:57:09 AM

Testimony for PBS on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>     | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Leslie Door         | Hawaii Insurers Council | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

House Committee on Public safety

Hawai'i Insurers Council supports this bill. HB 1064 implements Phase 3, a forward-looking report, from the Fire Safety Research Institute who conducted a study after the Lahaina Wildfires in 2023. We believe this bill adopts measures that will reduce fire risk to our community. Defensible space, assistance for vulnerable persons, the collection of insurance data, and a statewide building code, all contribute to a safer from fire community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Hawaiian  
Electric**

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEES ON  
PUBLIC SAFETY AND WATER & LAND**

**HB 1064  
Relating to Fire Protection**

Wednesday, January 29, 2025  
10:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 411

Jimmy D. Alberts  
Senior Vice President & Chief Operations Officer  
Hawaiian Electric

Dear Chairs Belatti and Hashem, Vice Chairs Iwamoto and Lamosao, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Jimmy D. Alberts and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric in support of HB 1064, Relating to Fire Protection.

Hawaiian Electric supports this bill, which aims to implement safety priorities from the Fire Safety Research Institute Phase 3 Forward-Looking Report. Wildfires and other climate change impacts are whole-of-society issues that must be addressed collectively with a holistic approach by the State, counties, and private sector.

Hawaiian Electric recently submitted its 2025-2027 Wildfire Safety Strategy to the Hawai'i Public Utilities Commission, which details Hawaiian Electric's plans to deploy new technology, fortify infrastructure, minimize fire hazards and expand community partnerships to significantly reduce the risk of a wildfire started by its equipment. One aspect of this comprehensive bill is that it would give the State Fire Marshal's office discretionary power to explore additional opportunities to reduce wildfire risk, including engaging with electric utilities regarding further actions to protect public

safety, reduce risk to electric company customers, and promote electrical system resilience to wildfire damage. Hawaiian Electric would welcome the opportunity to work with the State Fire Marshal's office as we continue our work with many State, county, and local stakeholders to create a safer and more resilient Hawai'i.

Accordingly, Hawaiian Electric supports HB 1064. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



# Kamehameha Schools®

House Committee on Public Safety

Time: 10:30 a.m.

Date: January 29, 2025

Where: Conference Room 411

## TESTIMONY

By: Kā'eo Duarte

Vice President, 'Āina Pauahi

### **RE: HB1064, Relating to Fire Protection**

Aloha e nā Luna Ho'omalū Belatti, nā Hope Luna Ho'omalū Iwamoto, a me nā Lālā o nā Kōmike.

Kamehameha Schools appreciates this opportunity to **support** HB1064.

We are in support of this bill which aims to implement the recommendations in Phase 3 of the Fire Safety Research Institute, including, the establishment of the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and the creation of defensible space requirements. As stewards of our 'Āina Pauahi, we mālama this 'āina for the education of Native Hawaiian children in perpetuity. An essential part of this vision is to work with local governments, and the community to ensure the safety of our keiki and kaiāulu.

Founded in 1887 by the legacy of Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, Kamehameha Schools (KS) is a private, educational, charitable trust committed to improving the capability and well-being of Native Hawaiian people through education. KS envisions a thriving lāhui where learners, grounded in Christian and Hawaiian values, grow into 'ōiwi leaders who inspire and contribute to their communities, both locally and globally.



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**The State Legislature  
House Committees on Public Safety and Water & Land  
Wednesday, January 29, 2025  
Conference Room 411, 10:30 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Della Au Belatti and Mark J. Hashem  
FROM: Keali'i S. López, AARP Hawai'i State Director

RE: Support for H.B. 1064 Relating to Fire Protection

Aloha Chair Marten and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals aged 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 135,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families.

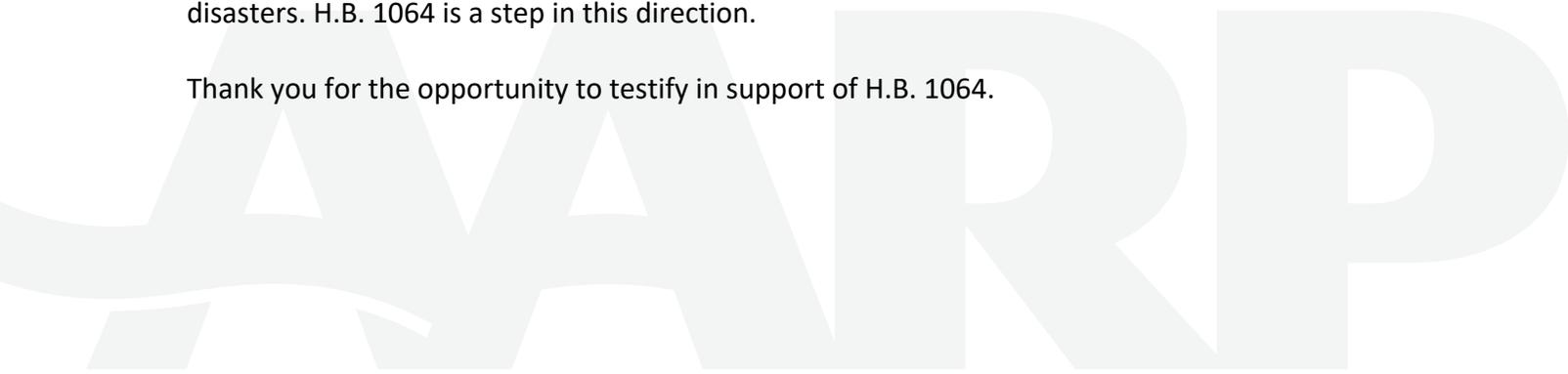
**AARP is in support of H.B. 1064, which amends laws concerning the Office of the State Fire Marshall to best effectuate the recommendations of the "Phase 3" Forward-Looking Report by the Fire Safety Research Institute on the August 2023 Maui wildfires.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support H.B. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1064. As you know, more than two-thirds of the victims in the Maui wildfire were 60 and older. Kupuna are the most vulnerable population in every kind of natural disaster from wildfires to hurricanes to tsunamis.

AARP believes policymakers should create and implement plans to address the needs of vulnerable populations like kupuna and people with disabilities. The State Fire Marshall's Office is one of the agencies that is in the best position to regularly conduct specific, comprehensive and evidence-based planning to address the needs of older adults, people with disabilities, and their caregivers in wildfires. They should be given the authority and tools to do this.

We need to encourage disaster resilience and reduce the number of kupuna deaths in natural disasters. H.B. 1064 is a step in this direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1064.



**HB-1064**

Submitted on: 1/27/2025 11:03:18 AM

Testimony for PBS on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| robin knox          | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Much needed, surprised that these provisions do not already exist

**HB-1064**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 9:14:09 AM

Testimony for PBS on 1/29/2025 10:30:00 AM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| David Foster        | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

This bill is absolutely essential for improving fire safety particularly as it relates to wildfire protection. Speaking as a Big Island resident of Waikoloa the future of our community is at stake. I urge the Committee to approve and push this measure forward AND insure adequate funding follows.