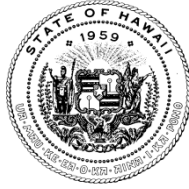


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
CURT T. OTAGURO
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

February 12, 2023
2:00 P.M.
State Capitol, Room 325

H.B. 508
RELATING TO FIREWORKS

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** this measure that extends the sunset of the Illegal Fireworks Task Force and appropriates funds.

DOT is represented on this task force by its Deputy Director of Transportation for Harbors and supports this continued work for the next five years. The results of the task force over the past two years demonstrate the need for this work to continue.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



MIKE LAMBERT
DIRECTOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT GOVERNOR
KE KE'ENA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT
Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai
715 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

JARED K. REDULLA
Deputy Director
Law Enforcement

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 508
RELATING TO FIREWORKS
Before the House Committee on
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 325, & Videoconference
Testifiers: Jared Redulla

Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) strongly supports House Bill 508. Act 67, Session Laws of Hawaii'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.

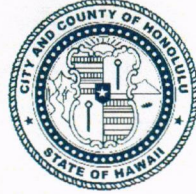
Since its establishment, the Illegal Fireworks Task Force has demonstrated significant success in its operations. Through coordinated efforts with partner agencies, the Task Force has successfully removed over 200,000 pounds of illegal fireworks from Hawaii's streets, with operations and investigations continuing to yield positive results. The extension of the sunset date from June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2030, is crucial for maintaining this momentum and ensuring long-term effectiveness in combating illegal fireworks.

The appropriation of funds for fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 is essential for the Task Force to continue its successful operations. These funds are necessary for maintaining administrative support staff, sustaining Task Force operations, and providing reimbursements to law enforcement agencies for Task Force-related activities, including personnel costs, overtime and other salary-related payments, fuel charges, equipment, and expenses related to the storage and disposal of confiscated fireworks.

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

HONOLULU POLICE DEPARTMENT
KA 'OIHANA MĀKA'I O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

801 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 529-3111 • WEBSITE: www.honolulupd.org



RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA

ARTHUR J. LOGAN
CHIEF
KAHU MĀKA'I

KEITH K. HORIKAWA
RADE K. VANIC
DEPUTY CHIEFS
HOPE LUNA NUI MĀKA'I

OUR REFERENCE RI-HR

February 12, 2025

The Honorable David A. Tarnas, Chair
and Members
Committee on Judiciary and
Hawaiian Affairs
House of Representatives
415 South Beretania Street, Room 325
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Tarnas and Members:

SUBJECT: House Bill No. 508, Relating Fireworks

I am Raynor Ikehara, Major of the Narcotics/Vice Division of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD supports House Bill No. 508, Relating to Fireworks.


The HPD supports all legislation that aims to reduce the use of illegal fireworks by strengthening current fireworks laws.

The HPD urges you to support House Bill No. 508, Relating to Fireworks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

APPROVED:

Sincerely,



Arthur J. Logan
Chief of Police


for Raynor Ikehara, Major
Narcotics/Vice Division



Hawaii Representatives & Senators:

On behalf of the Libertarian Party of Hawaii, I am writing to express our strong opposition to any prohibitions and enforcement measures targeting fireworks. We believe Hawaiians have the right to pursue and engage in any activities that bring them joy and fulfillment.

Fireworks prohibitions and regulations infringe upon the freedom of our citizens to partake in this time-honored custom, diminishing the spirit of celebration and unity that fireworks bring.

Implementing strict enforcement measures to crack down on fireworks usage would only serve to burden law enforcement resources, and divert needed attention away from more pressing issues. Prohibitions and heavy enforcement will lead to unnecessary conflict between police and citizens, eroding trust and creating an atmosphere of fear and animosity. Causing harm against another person is already illegal, and crimes can already be prosecuted without these new tyrannical enforcement measures.

The Libertarian Party of Hawaii stands firm in our support of individual freedom and opposes any measures that encroach upon our citizens' rights.

In Freedom,

Abbra Green

Executive Secretary, Libertarian Party of Hawaii

lphisecretary@gmail.com



Hawaiian Humane Society

People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 10, 2025

To: Chair Rep. David Tarnas
Vice Chair Rep. Mahina Poepoe
and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

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

RE: Testimony in support of HB 508: Relating to Fireworks
Thursday, Feb. 12, 2025, 2 p.m., Room 325 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for House Bill 508, which amends Act 67, SLH 2023, to appropriate funds for the illegal fireworks task force for FY 2025-2026 and FY 2026-2027 and to extend the sunset date of the Act from 6/30/2025 to 6/30/2030.

This measure supports the incredible work of the Illegal Fireworks Task Force, which has seized 187,000 pounds - or more than 93 tons - of illegal fireworks found in shipping containers since it was established. Add that to the ample evidence that tons of illegal fireworks are still making it onto the local black market and the magnitude of this insidious problem is staggering.

Hawaiian Humane supports any attempt to restrict fireworks from residential neighborhoods. After the tragic deaths and injuries on O'ahu this year, it should be clear to our community that lighting off explosives in our neighborhoods poses an unacceptable risk. Hawaiian Humane has long educated our community about keeping pets safe from the terror of fireworks around New Years and July 4, but these bombs increasingly go off for months at a time without warning. That makes it impossible for pet owners to prepare and creates sustained stress on people and animals, which can do lasting damage to their emotional, mental and physical health.

Please pass HB508, support the work of our law enforcement agencies, and prevent future tragedies. Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 3:05:08 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass HB508 to fund the fireworks task force. Fireworks continue to terrorize, maim, and kill humans and animals throughout our state in a cruel and environmentally destructive fashion, for no good purpose.

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:44:45 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Anything we can do to reduce or eliminate deadly fireworks is good.

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:09:23 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support HB508 because Honolulu has a illegal skyrock problem and we need to fund a police unit that works to enforce the law.

Samuel Mitchell

Makiki NB-10

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:37:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Willis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Strongly Oppose

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:50:37 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kanoe Willis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Strongly Oppose

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:51:49 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I have been a resident of Pearl City since 1993 and have seen the increase in illegal fireworks use over the years. I am in favor of appropriating funds to the Illegal Fireworks Task Force for FY 2025-26 and 2026-27 and to extend the sunset date. We should not withhold any funds towards the goal of curbing illegal fireworks. The tragedy of the Aliamanu fireworks explosion was not the first and it will not be the last if we do not continue to address the illegal fireworks situation. Does it take something so terrible as this explosion to finally keep the narrative going???

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:52:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Natalie Graham-Wood	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB508. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:12:25 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melanie Kim	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill to appropriate funding for the task force addressing the transportation and selling of illegal fireworks. Hawaii has already seen the devastation illegal fireworks causes by increasing the risk of fires , human and economic loss as noted by the 2025 New Year's explosion in Pearl City.

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:51:19 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Saul	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Am writing in support of HB508 Relating to Fireworks.

Many arguments have already been made about the wisdom of addressing damaging effects of unlimited, unregulated use of fireworks.

My concern today is for the devastating impact it can have on pets, even those we try to protect by keeping them indoors.

Naturally, resources are required to assure that work done in this area can continue, and I would hope that the existing effort can be extended and funds be made available for it.

Thank you.

**Alice Saul
Hawaii Kai, Honolulu**

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:26:09 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT HB508 that Amends Act 67, SLH 2023, to appropriate funds for the illegal fireworks task force for FY 2025-2026 and FY 2026-2027 and to extend the sunset date of the Act from 6/30/2025 to 6/30/2030.

Act 67 established the Illegal Fireworks Task Force (IFTF) under the Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) on June 7, 2023. The IFTF has made the most progress thus far, to interrupt the supply chain and distribution that led to some areas on Oahu noting a slight reduction of illegal fireworks in 2023. This effort has accomplished more than any other initiative to reduce illegal fireworks use, and has resulted in ongoing criminal investigations, two felony indictments, and covert operations that resulted in twenty criminal citations. There is a need to continue this effort to reduce illegal fireworks at the ports so it will make it much easier for police to enforce end-users.

In the year 2024 illegal fireworks made a comeback. This is due to the IFTF members being able to commit only part-time due to other primary duties. Much of the IFTF's daily work is done by state narcotics investigators because the technique to interdict illegal fireworks are the same used to interdict illegal drugs. To continue the excellent work that has been done so far, Jordan Lowe's 2025 Report to the Legislature on the IFTF recommended the **"creation of a full-time fireworks control unit comprised of criminal investigators"**.

The Aliamanu tragedy was sad, and it is hopeful that the lives lost and those suffering from life-changing critical injuries were not in vain but will provide the wake-up call to take the use of illegal fireworks seriously. This all starts with legislators creating laws to invoke stiffer penalties and higher fines, and allows enforcement to the fullest extent of the law to instill a fear of getting caught and induce deterrence. This may require more appropriations committed this year to be effective, but how do you put a price on lives lost, life-changing deformities, and psychological issues that may require medical attention for the rest of one's life? Yes, enough is enough.

Please provide your support for **HB508**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:06:28 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stephanie McLaughlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please pass this important bill. It will help Hawaii's people and animals.

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:55:03 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Hussenbux	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs will hear HB508 Relating to Fireworks amends Act 67, SLH 2023, to appropriate funds for the illegal fireworks task force for FY 2025-2026 and FY 2026-2027 and to extend the sunset date of the Act from 6/30/2025 to 6/30/2030.

This is an important Bill we fully endorse as we in Britain know very well how fireworks can adversely affect the lives of vulnerable adults, children, companion animals, farmed animals and wildlife.

We are informed that the Illegal Fireworks Task Force has seized more than 93 tons - of illegal fireworks found in shipping containers in the short time since its establishment.

We are in strong support of extending its great work interdicting these explosives before they can wreak havoc in your neighbourhoods.

We beg to support HB508.

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:23:18 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nicholas Zehr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

I write in strong OPPOSITION to this bill, which seeks to extend and fund government enforcement measures against fireworks use in Hawai‘i. While public safety concerns are valid, this bill represents government overreach, inefficient use of taxpayer dollars, and unnecessary interference with cultural traditions.

Fireworks are a longstanding cultural tradition in Hawai‘i. Penalizing individuals for using fireworks responsibly infringes on personal freedoms without effectively addressing safety concerns. Instead of blanket bans, we should consider controlled solutions, such as designated community fireworks zones, that allow safe use while preserving traditions.

At a time when Hawai‘i faces critical challenges—housing, rising costs, and infrastructure—spending on fireworks enforcement is wasteful. Studies show that increased enforcement has little impact on reducing illegal fireworks use or injuries. Resources should be focused on more pressing public safety issues.

Extending this law risks increasing selective enforcement and unnecessary confrontations between law enforcement and citizens. Hawai‘i already has strict fireworks laws, and further crackdowns are unlikely to eliminate the underground market for fireworks.

Instead of expanding enforcement, I recommend:

- **Designated Fireworks Zones** for safe, controlled celebrations.
- **Public Education** on fire safety and responsible use.
- **Decriminalization** of consumer fireworks with safety regulations to ensure safe access.

These solutions would balance safety with individual freedoms, reduce harm, and avoid further government overreach.

This bill is an unnecessary expansion of state power that wastes taxpayer dollars and infringes on personal freedoms. I urge the committee to reject it and explore community-based alternatives that prioritize public safety and respect cultural traditions.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Zehr

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:01:30 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Renee Rabb	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the work of the illegal fireworks task force. It's money well spent.

Mahalo,

Renee Rabb

Keaau, HI 96749

Big Island

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 4:03:28 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Chiwa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Tarnas, Vice Chair Representative Poepoe and Members of the Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs.

Please vote for HB 508, which I strongly support, to help the Illegal Fireworks Task Force.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:46:13 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carole R. Richelieu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

strong support of extending great work interdicting explosives before they can wreak havoc in our neighborhoods and on our islands

Hawai'i Kai

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:35:35 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am in full support of providing funds to the illegal fireworks task force for their enforcement activities. We are not providing enough support to enforcement and that must change.

HB-508

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:52:14 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/12/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lee Cuccia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support. Enough is enough.