

**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 806, HOUSE DRAFT 1**

**RELATING TO FIREWORKS**

Before the House Committee on

**JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**

Friday, February 7, 2025, 2:05 p.m.

State Capitol Conference Room 325, & Videoconference

Testifiers: Mike Lambert

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

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) strongly supports House Bill 806, House Draft 1. This bill appropriates funds for the Department of Law Enforcement to conduct sting operations on Oahu to enforce fireworks ordinances and laws. These sting operations are critical to our ongoing efforts to combat illegal fireworks in Hawaii.

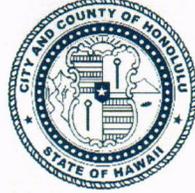
Through the recently established Illegal Fireworks Task Force (Act 67, SLH 2023), the DLE has already demonstrated significant success in interdicting illegal fireworks, with approximately 200,000 pounds of illegal fireworks removed from Hawaii's streets through coordinated law enforcement operations. Targeted sting operations on Oahu will enhance our ability to enforce fireworks laws and further protect our communities.

These operations are resource-intensive and require specialized personnel, equipment, and coordinated efforts. The funding will support necessary law enforcement personnel, overtime and other salary-related payments, operational equipment, and associated costs required for successful sting operations. This dedicated funding stream will significantly strengthen our enforcement capabilities and serve as a deterrent to those who violate fireworks laws.

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**

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HOPE LUNA NUI MĀKA'I

OUR REFERENCE JP-HR

February 7, 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. 806, H.D. 1, Relating to Fireworks

I am Jerome Pacarro, Captain of the Narcotics/Vice Division of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD supports House Bill No. 806, H.D. 1, 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. 806, H.D. 1, Relating to Fireworks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

  
for Jerome Pacarro, Captain  
Narcotics/Vice Division

APPROVED:



 Arthur J. Logan  
Chief of Police

TESTIMONY OF  
**LARRY S VERAY**

TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

***IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB806 HD1***

**RELATED TO FIREWORKS**

February 5, 2025

Aloha, Chair Tarnas and Vice Chair Poepoe and committee members. I am Larry Veray, Chairman for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21. I am submitting this testimony representing our board as a whole. The board passed two resolutions on Illegal Aerial Fireworks on January 25, 2022 and January 28, 2025. **We are in STRONG SUPPORT OF HB806 HD1. Bottom line: we need to appropriate funds for Department of Law Enforcement to conduct sting operations on Oahu to enforce fireworks ordinances, laws and arrest and prosecute criminals.**

With the tons of illegal fireworks being shipped into Hawai'i, we need to improve our law enforcement for state and federal officers to be in partnership to engage illegal sales of fireworks in Hawai'i. We also need to increase funding to support purchasing technology, increasing the number of law enforcement offices, effectively employing a multi-agency Federal and State Task Force coupled with intelligence information while following the money received by organized crime in the mainland and Hawai'i. Funding this bill could allow our law enforcement agencies to mitigate illegal fireworks shipments to our state but importantly, take down the covert leadership by acting on the following:

- Who are the King Pins in the mainland and Hawaii distributing, selling and transporting fireworks?
- Where is the money flow from this interstate distribution?
- How are illegal fireworks being shipped to Hawai'i?
- What is the profile of the containers that have been interdicted and what other contraband has been identified with these illegal shipments; ghost guns?
- Where are the warehouses on the Hawai'ian Islands and where is the distribution?
- Employ Federal intelligence agency support to detect explosives arriving at our port facilities following the money vice employing a random inspection program that will yield low results and waste a lot of time and effort
- Purchase explosive sniffing dogs while inspecting containers
- Acquire explosive sniffing technology to detect illegal fireworks packed in containers
- Acquire a location to store confiscated illegal fireworks to include hiring a contractor to destroy this evidence when no longer needed for litigation
- Develop a monetary reward program for information leading to the interdiction of any shipping container/s entering Hawai'i port facilities to include locations of warehouses for public distribution

We can save time, effort and money if we focus on the source of where the shipping containers are being repacked, turned around for shipment to Hawai'i. That source is in the mainland and if that source is identified and prosecuted, we then mitigate those illegal fireworks shipments to Hawai'i and other mainland states that have suffered the same problem.

**PLEASE ALLOCATE FUNDING FOR HB806 HD1 for law enforcement agencies to engage organized crime, following the money, receive community and neighborhood tips and prosecute criminals receiving, transporting, storing and selling illegal fireworks on Oahu and outer islands.**

*Larry S. Veray*

**HB-806-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 7:13:05 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2025 2:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
C. Kauai Lucas	Kuli'ou'ou-Kalani Iki Neighborhood Board	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Any practice or activity that results in the killing of innocent members of the community is unacceptable.

Please add a provision to make it a more serious **criminal offence to deploy fireworks on public roadways**. This suggestion was made at Neighborhood Board 2's meeting last night by Member Fuji, a 30 year HPD veteran. We passed a motion to support HB806 at that meeting.

me ka pono,

Kauai Lucas, Vice Chair Kuliou'ou-Kalani Iki Neighborhood Board

**HB-806-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 12:14:36 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2025 2:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I support HB806 HD1.

HPD simply needs to enforce the laws we have and any new laws. Watching HPD on the news, driving by ariel fireworks going off in the street, should never be something I see again.

Gregory Misakian

**HB-806-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:00:51 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2025 2:05:00 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 HB806, HD1** that Appropriates funds for Department of Law Enforcement to conduct sting operations on Oahu to enforce fireworks ordinances or laws.

The Department of Law Enforcement’s (DLE) annual report to the 2025 Legislature proves that sting operations are effective. In a joint operation with Honolulu Police, two Oahu men were indicted and charged with a felony for illegal distribution of aerial fireworks. Both pled “no contest” and will be sentenced in Spring, 2025. Covert operations conducted by the Illegal Fireworks Task Force (IFTF) resulted in a total of 20 citations, 6 issued on July 4, 2024 and 14 issued during the holiday season in 2024. So far, the two who were cited on July 4th have taken pleas deals in District Court.

The actions taken by the IFTF appears to be very promising, and can succeed if they are provided the additional personnel and funding for whatever is needed to increase the operation to full-time. The IFTF have coordinated the best efforts thus far, that have shown notable results in combatting illegal fireworks.

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 pass **HB806, HD1**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-806-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:52:23 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2025 2:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Please support HB806 HD1. I would just like to suggest a sentencing enhancement for people who set aerials in the street because they know they are dangerous and don't want them above their homes. This endangers all of their neighbors and they should not just be prosecuted but additional fines should be added. Mahalo.**

**HB-806-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 8:56:50 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2025 2:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support. We must use every tool in the tool box to prevent another tragedy loike what happened on Jan. 1, 2025, with six now dead from one major explosion, and at least another dead because of illegal fireworks.

**HB-806-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 9:43:01 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2025 2:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nicholas Zehr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing in strong opposition to HB806 HD1, which seeks to appropriate taxpayer funds for increased law enforcement operations targeting fireworks use. This bill expands government power in an ineffective and fiscally irresponsible attempt to prohibit a long-standing cultural tradition. Rather than addressing underlying issues, it relies on excessive policing and surveillance, further infringing on personal freedoms while misallocating resources that could be better used elsewhere.

The black market for fireworks exists because of prohibition, not in spite of it. Just as we saw during alcohol prohibition and the failed War on Drugs, banning a popular product only drives it underground, creating more dangerous conditions and increased law enforcement burdens.

Instead of criminalizing voluntary activities, Hawai'i should explore legalization with regulation, allowing for:

- Licensed, controlled sales to reduce black-market activity.
- Firework safety education to minimize accidents.
- Tax revenue generation to offset emergency response costs rather than burden taxpayers.

By shifting from a failed enforcement model to a regulated market with safety oversight, we can reduce harm without expanding government surveillance and criminal penalties.

This bill proposes an unspecified amount of taxpayer money to fund sting operations and criminal surveillance against fireworks users. Given Hawaii's limited law enforcement resources, this is an irresponsible misallocation.

- The real threats to public safety—violent crime, property crime, drug trafficking, and homelessness—should take precedence over policing fireworks displays.
- Law enforcement agencies are already stretched thin, and increased enforcement against a seasonal activity is a poor use of resources.
- Instead of creating new enforcement costs, a regulated fireworks market could generate tax revenue to cover any related public safety expenses.

Rather than wasting money on an unwinnable crackdown, the state should focus on smart policies that balance public safety with individual freedom.

Fireworks are deeply embedded in Hawaii's diverse cultural heritage, particularly in celebrations like Chinese New Year, Filipino festivals, and local holiday traditions. Banning fireworks and increasing enforcement is not just an attack on personal freedom—it is an attack on the cultural expression of Hawaii's communities.

For those concerned about noise or air quality, community-based solutions—such as designated firework zones, voluntary noise reduction programs, and education campaigns—are far preferable to outright bans enforced through government surveillance. The principle of individual responsibility should take precedence over blanket prohibitions.

Supporters of this bill cite concerns about wildfires, injuries, PTSD in veterans, and pet trauma—all valid issues. However, criminalizing fireworks and expanding law enforcement is not the answer.

Alternative solutions include:

- Private liability laws—those who cause damage should be financially responsible, rather than punishing all users.
- Designated firework zones—allowing responsible use without disrupting neighborhoods.
- Voluntary initiatives—promoting community-led education on firework safety instead of state enforcement.

We do not need more government overreach to address these concerns. We need smarter, liberty-respecting solutions that empower communities, not state surveillance.

This bill is a misguided attempt to solve a problem created by prohibition itself. It would waste taxpayer money, expand law enforcement powers unnecessarily, and criminalize cultural traditions. Instead of continuing failed prohibition policies, Hawai'i should pursue a regulated, safety-conscious approach that respects both public safety and personal freedom.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to reject HB806 HD1 and seek solutions that do not infringe upon the rights of law-abiding citizens.

Sincerely,  
Nicholas Zehr

**HB-806-HD-1**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 6:21:40 PM

Testimony for JHA on 2/7/2025 2:05:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rebecca J. Carlson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in favor of HB806 HD1 relating to fireworks.

In the rural Oahu community where I live, fireworks are an almost daily nuisance. They are frightening to pets and small children and also to sensitive adults. The fire hazard they pose is increasing as our island continues in drought conditions. Only a few weeks ago, I was surprised to hear fireworks going off very close outside my window and saw that someone had decided to launch fireworks directly on the other side of my back fence, in a grassy water catchment area not thirty feet from my home. This was unsafe not only for me and my property, but for those who were standing nearby in the street, watching the display.

HB806 HD1 would provide funding to help law enforcement counter illegal fireworks sales and distribution, reducing the danger to life and property that fireworks pose. I encourage our lawmakers to support this bill.

Mahalo!

Rebecca J. Carlson