

**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 SENATE BILL 476**  
**RELATING TO FIREWORKS**  
Before the Senate Committee on  
**PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS**  
Wednesday, February 5, 2025, 3:15 PM  
State Capitol Conference Room 225 & Videoconference  
Testifiers: Mike Lambert, or Jared Redulla

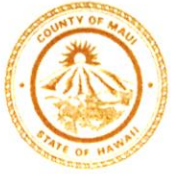
Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) strongly supports Senate Bill 476

The illegal use of fireworks continues to be a significant public safety concern in Hawaii. Moreover, the proliferation and use of illegal fireworks remains a persistent challenge that requires strong deterrent measures. This bill's proposal to increase fines for fireworks-related violations directly aligns with law enforcement and the government's mission to promote compliance with state fireworks control laws.

By increasing monetary penalties for violations, the increased fines proposed in this bill complement our ongoing enforcement efforts and will serve as a stronger deterrent against illegal fireworks possession and use. This measure represents an important critical step in deterring illegal fireworks in Hawaii.

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



**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
MAYOR

# POLICE DEPARTMENT

## COUNTY OF MAUI


55 MAHALANI STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
TELEPHONE: (808) 244-6400  
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**JOHN PELLETIER**  
CHIEF OF POLICE

**WADE M. MAEDA**  
DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE

TO: Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs

FROM: John Pelletier, Chief of Police 

DATE: January 30, 2025

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF SB476, RELATING TO FIREWORKS**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in SUPPORT of this important measure. The bill increases fines that may be assessed against certain fireworks-related violations. Effective 07/01/25.

The Maui Police Department recognizes the importance of culture here in the Hawaiian Islands. Part of that culture, is having large luaus and gatherings to celebrate special occasions. These special occasions include Fourth of July and New Year's Eve, which usually include an increasingly number of illegal fireworks being set off to celebrate. Unfortunately, every year it has led to fires, injuries and tragic situations like the Aliamanu Fireworks Explosion this past New Year's Eve.

Maui County continues to respond to an influx of calls for service involving fireworks violations during Forth of July and New Year's Eve. Over the past few years, the county has dealt with about 2,000 calls for service, documented over 200 reports, issued close to 25 citations and made 7 arrests all specific to fireworks violations.

The Hawaii Revised Statue 132-D sets the parameters, prohibitions, and enforcement powers to address fireworks and violations specific to fireworks. It is in no way deficient in guidelines needing to be followed. The education provided by the fire departments, through public safety announcements, commercials, advertisements are put at the forefront, prior to Fourth of July and New Year's Eve celebrations. But yet, there are individuals that consistently have disregard, ignorance and defiance to the law that leads to first responders having to put their lives on the line, responding to incidents of fireworks, that has led to property damage, injuries and loss of life.

We understand the importance of culture and what it means to the community. This bill isn't against culture, it's to change the behavior of those individuals that have made negligent and reckless decisions, specific to fireworks, with consequences that will deter their behavior from continuing. The Maui Police Department supports the increase of fines to a mandatory \$10,000 (no judicial discretion) for specific firework-related violations.

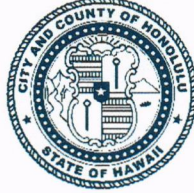
Mahalo for your consideration.

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.honolulu.police.hawaii.gov](http://www.honolulu.police.hawaii.gov)

**LATE**

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 JP-HR

February 5, 2025

The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair  
and Members  
Committee on Public Safety and  
Military Affairs  
State Senate  
415 South Beretania Street, Room 225  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Elefante and Members:

SUBJECT: Senate Bill No. 476, 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 the passage of Senate Bill No. 476, 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 Senate Bill No. 476, Relating to Fireworks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

APPROVED:

Sincerely,

  
Arthur J. Logan  
Chief of Police

  
Jerome Pacarro, Captain  
Narcotics/Vice Division

**SB-476**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:48:17 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/5/2025 3:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b>                              | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Lisa Dau            | Testifying for Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Keiki Injury Prevention Coalition supports SB476. Please consider passing this bill.

Thank you,

Lisa Dau, RN, Injury Prevention Coordinator  
KIPC



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](mailto:lphisecretary@gmail.com)

**SB-476**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 1:12:16 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/5/2025 3:15:00 PM

**LATE**

| <b>Submitted By</b>    | <b>Organization</b>                        | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>    |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Austin "Shiloh" Martin | Testifying for Libertarian Party of Hawaii | Oppose                    | Remotely Via Zoom |

Comments:

Aloha!

We oppose this bill. Prohibitions simply do not work, because they direct criminal enforcement at non-criminal behavior, resulting in overreach, blowback, and severe malinvestment.

Aloha!

**SB-476**

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 12:58:29 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/5/2025 3:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Elefante and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of SB476 to increase fines for the illegal use of fireworks.

An increase in arrests and action by law enforcement must also take place to hold criminals accountable and to show the public that government is serious about this issue.

Thanks for your time.

Will Espero

**SB-476**

Submitted on: 1/31/2025 10:06:50 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/5/2025 3:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

I am in full support of every bill which will work to stop the lawlessness of illegal fireworks. We need to take a holistic approach to the problem, to make the community safe from the horrific noise, injuries, death of what clearly is not cultural behavior, to save those with PTSD from more trauma, and to spare our pets from this terror. Please support all fireworks bills and increase enforcement.



**SB-476**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:02:04 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/5/2025 3:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gordon B. Lindsey   | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I am in support of SB476

**SB-476**

Submitted on: 2/4/2025 1:34:23 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/5/2025 3:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Wakai,

**I SUPPORT SB476** that increases fines that may be assessed against certain fireworks-related violations.

Exorbitant amounts are spent to purchase illegal fireworks so the fines need to be high and increased for repeat offenders in order to reduce use and demand.

Illegal Fireworks have been out of control for years. Over the years, there have been serious injuries, fatalities, and extensive property damage, where owners themselves had to foot the bill because of the lack of proof or evidence showing who is to blame. It is time that violators pay for creating havoc and violating the law instead of feeding the black market.

Please pass SB476 that can help deter the use of illegal fireworks and prevent another incident like the Aliamanu tragedy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-476**

Submitted on: 1/30/2025 10:39:17 AM

Testimony for PSM on 2/5/2025 3:15:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Bronson Teixeira    | Individual          | Oppose                    | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I stand in opposition to this bill.

**SB-476**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:39:57 PM

Testimony for PSM on 2/5/2025 3:15:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I write in strong **OPPOSITION** to this bill, which seeks to increase fines for fireworks-related violations. While I understand concerns about disruptions caused by fireworks, this proposal is yet another example of government overreach that punishes individuals rather than addressing the root causes of the issue.

**1. Personal Liberty and the Right to Celebrate**

The use of fireworks has been a long-standing tradition in Hawai'i, particularly in cultural and family celebrations. Imposing higher fines on individuals engaging in voluntary, peaceful celebrations is an infringement on personal freedom. A truly free society should not be in the business of micromanaging how people celebrate through punitive measures that disproportionately affect ordinary citizens.

**2. Criminalization and Government Overreach**

Increasing fines does not solve the underlying issue—it merely empowers the state to impose harsher penalties on its own people. Instead of addressing why people continue to use fireworks despite restrictions, this bill resorts to heavier financial punishment, which often disproportionately harms working-class individuals.

Moreover, enforcement of fireworks bans has already proven difficult and ineffective. With limited law enforcement resources, increasing fines will not deter illegal activity—it will only create more opportunities for government intrusion into private lives without actually preventing the use of fireworks.

**3. The Failure of Prohibition**

History has shown that prohibition-based policies do not work. Whether it be alcohol, gambling, or fireworks, banning or over-regulating a popular activity only drives it underground rather than eliminating it. This bill assumes that higher fines will serve as a deterrent, but in reality, it will likely push more people to find alternative means of obtaining fireworks while straining police resources that could be better spent addressing actual crimes.

#### 4. Localized Solutions Over Blanket Restrictions

If the concern is about noise, safety, or property damage, then localized solutions—not broad, heavy-handed penalties—should be considered. Private property owners and communities should be able to set their own standards for fireworks use, rather than having the government impose blanket restrictions.

This bill does not respect individual freedoms, fails to acknowledge the realities of enforcement, and ignores the lessons of failed prohibitions. Instead of increasing penalties, the legislature should explore alternative solutions such as designated fireworks zones, better public education, and market-based approaches that allow voluntary compliance rather than forced adherence.

I urge you to reject this bill and uphold the principles of personal liberty and limited government.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Nicholas Zehr