

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 Senate Committee on

PUBLIC SAFETY AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

JUDICIARY

Thursday, March 13, 2025, 9:30 AM

State Capitol Conference Room 016 & Videoconference

Testifiers: Mike Lambert

Chairs Elefante, Rhoads, Vice Chairs Wakai, Gabbard, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) 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 or laws. Illegal fireworks continue to pose a significant threat to public safety throughout Hawaii, particularly on Oahu where population density increases the risks associated with illegal fireworks use.

The DLE has been actively working to combat illegal fireworks through the Illegal Fireworks Task Force established by Act 67, Session Laws of Hawai'i, 2023. While the Task Force has made significant progress in interdicting illegal fireworks coming into the state, dedicated sting operations at the local level would provide a critical additional enforcement mechanism to address the use and sale of illegal fireworks within communities.

Effective enforcement requires proactive measures such as sting operations, which allow law enforcement to identify and apprehend those who distribute and use illegal fireworks. These operations would be strategically designed to target areas with high incidence of illegal fireworks activity, particularly during peak seasons around New Year's celebrations and the Fourth of July.

The requested funding would enable DLE to conduct targeted operations, including necessary personnel overtime, specialized equipment, and operational costs associated with planning and executing effective sting operations. This allocation would significantly enhance the DLE's capacity to enforce existing fireworks laws on Oahu and serve as a deterrent to future violations.

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

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

LATE

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Brandon Elefante, Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety
and Military Affairs
State Senate
State Capitol, Room 217
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
State Senate
State Capitol, Room 228
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Elefante and Rhoads:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 806, House Draft (HD) 1, Relating to Fireworks

I am Kazuo Todd, Chair of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC). The SFC supports HB 806, HD 1, which appropriates funds for the Department of Law Enforcement to conduct sting operations on Oahu to enforce fireworks ordinances or laws.

The SFC supports legislation to facilitate enforcement of the Fireworks Control Law and strongly urges your committees to pass HB 806, HD 1.

Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 723-7169 or glum@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

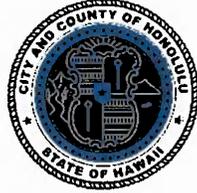
Handwritten signature of Kazuo Todd.

KAZUO TODD
Chair

KT/GL

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.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 **RP-PA**

March 13, 2025

The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair
and Members
Committee on Public Safety and Military Affairs
The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
and Members
Committee on Judiciary
State Senate
415 South Beretania Street, Room 016
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chairs Elefante and Rhoads and Members:

SUBJECT: House Bill No. 806, H.D. 1, Relating to Fireworks

I am Major Randall Platt of District 4 (Kailua/Kāne'ōhe/Kahuku) 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.

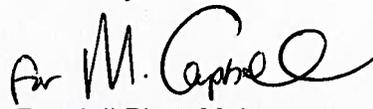
The HPD urges you to support House Bill No. 806, H.D. 1, Relating to Fireworks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

APPROVED:


Arthur J. Logan
Chief of Police

Sincerely,


Randall Platt, Major
District 4

**HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT
KA 'OIHANA KINAI AHI O HONOLULU
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

636 SOUTH STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 723-7139 • FAX: (808) 723-7111 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



SHELDON K. HAO
FIRE CHIEF
LUNA NUI KINAI AHI

JASON SAMALA
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF
HOPE LUNA NUI KINAI AHI

March 11, 2025

The Honorable Brandon Elefante, Chair
Committee on Public Safety
and Military Affairs
State Senate
State Capitol, Room 217
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Committee on Judiciary
State Senate
State Capitol, Room 228
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chairs Elefante and Rhoads:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 806, House Draft (HD) 1 Relating to Fireworks

I am Sheldon K. Hao, Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The HFD supports HB 806, HD 1, which appropriates funds for the Department of Law Enforcement to conduct sting operations on O'ahu to enforce fireworks ordinances or laws.

The HFD supports legislation to facilitate enforcement of the Fireworks Control Law and strongly urges your committees to pass HB 806, HD 1.

Should you have questions, please contact Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 723-7169 or glum@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

SHELDON K. HAO
Fire Chief

SKH/GL:cn

RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director

BRADFORD K. VENTURA
Fire Chief

GAVIN L.M. FUJIOKA
Deputy Fire Chief



DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & PUBLIC SAFETY

COUNTY OF MAUI
200 DAIRY ROAD
KAHULUI, MAUI, HAWAII 96732
www.mauicounty.gov

March 12, 2025

LATE

The Honorable Brandon Elefante, Chair
Senate Committee on Public Safety
and Military Affairs
State Senate
State Capitol, Room 217
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary
State Senate
State Capitol, Room 228
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chairs Elefante and Rhoads:

**SUBJECT: HOUSE BILL (HB) 806, HOUSE DRAFT (HD) 1, RELATING TO
FIREWORKS**

I am Bradford K. Ventura, member of the Hawaii State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Maui Fire Department. The SFC supports HB 806, HD 1, which appropriates funds for the Department of Law Enforcement to conduct sting operations on Oahu to enforce fireworks ordinances or laws.

The SFC supports legislation to facilitate enforcement of the Fireworks Control Law and strongly urges your committees to pass HB 806, HD 1.

If you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at (808) 723-7169 or glum@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Ventura".

BRADFORD K. VENTURA
Fire Chief



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: March 10, 2025

To: Chairs Sens. Brandon J.C. Elefante & Karl Rhoads
Vice Chairs Sens. Glenn Wakai & Mike Gabbard
and Members of the Committees on
Public Safety and Military Affairs & Judiciary

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

RE: Testimony in support of HB 806, HD1: Relating to Fireworks
Thursday, March 13, 2025, 9:30 a.m., Room 016 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for House Bill 806, HD1, which appropriates funds for the Department of Law Enforcement to conduct sting operations on Oahu to enforce fireworks ordinances or laws.

DLE has played an important role in the incredible work of the Illegal Fireworks Task Force. We support extending this focus by appropriating funds for the department to conduct sting operations for the enforcement of fireworks laws.

Hawaiian Humane supports any attempt to restrict fireworks from residential neighborhoods. The ample evidence that tons of illegal fireworks are still making it onto the local black market despite the successful interdictions at our ports shows that the magnitude of this problem is staggering. 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 HB806, HD1, support the work of the Department of Law Enforcement, and prevent future tragedies. Mahalo for your consideration.



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

HB-806-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:30:36 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/13/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I am in strong support of HB 806, HD 1 passage this legislative session. This legislation aims to reduce the use of illegal fireworks by strengthening current fireworks laws.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of HB 806, HD 1.

HB-806-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 3:32:30 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/13/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
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 like what happened on Jan. 1, 2025, with more than six now dead from one major explosion, and at least another dead because of illegal fireworks.

HB-806-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 4:33:01 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/13/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We need this bill to conduct site inspection on private homes when deemed suspicious. Chief of Police chose not to go after fireworks offenders and reacting only after deaths occurred in Aliamanu disaster, The party will have the fireworks right there when attempting to pop. There needs to be consequences if they buy illegals

HB-806-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:12:36 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/13/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Frank Schultz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this initiative.

HB-806-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:37:14 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/13/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Elefante & Rhoads, Vice Chairs Wakai & Gabbard, 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”. One of the felons recently had his sentencing hearing and was given a fine of \$5,000 for possession without a license and for selling to someone who did not have a valid permit. He was sentenced to four years of supervised release. 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, 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 effectiveness of the operation. 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 support **HB806, HD1**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-806-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 10:08:24 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/13/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!

HB-806-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 2:44:06 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/13/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael A. Cobb Jr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this because it creates new enforcement measures that are not needed. We have enough laws.

HB-806-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:30:31 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/13/2025 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

I appreciate the opportunity to present my testimony regarding HB806. While the safety of our residents is paramount, the amended bill's enforcement-heavy approach expands government power in ways that risk infringing on personal liberties, misallocates scarce taxpayer resources, and neglects practical alternatives. I urge the committee to consider a balanced, regulated framework that addresses safety concerns without sacrificing our cultural traditions or fiscal responsibility.

Fireworks inherently pose risks such as injuries, fires, and air quality issues. However, historical evidence—from alcohol prohibition to the War on Drugs—demonstrates that broad bans often push activities underground, leading to more hazardous conditions. A regulated approach offers a pathway to mitigate these risks without resorting to an all-encompassing criminalization.

Rather than imposing blanket bans and expansive surveillance, a regulated market could address safety concerns while respecting individual freedoms. Key elements of this model include:

- **Licensing and Permitting:**
Only vendors meeting strict safety criteria would be allowed to sell fireworks, ensuring that products in the market adhere to high safety standards.
- **Designated Zones and Time Restrictions:**
Establishing specific areas and times for legal fireworks displays would reduce risks to bystanders and minimize disturbances for those with respiratory issues, PTSD, or other sensitivities.
- **Safety Education and Public Awareness:**
Community-based education campaigns can empower individuals to use fireworks responsibly, reducing accidental injuries without resorting to intrusive law enforcement.
- **Taxation and Revenue Generation:**
Taxing legal fireworks sales could generate revenue to fund safety initiatives and offset public emergency costs, rather than draining resources on extensive enforcement operations.

The bill's current proposal to divert significant taxpayer funds toward law enforcement operations is both inefficient and unsustainable:

- **Cost-Benefit Analysis:** Regulated sales would reduce emergency responses and related costs. Redirecting enforcement funds into a system that both mitigates risks and generates tax revenue is fiscally prudent.
- **Resource Prioritization:** With law enforcement already stretched thin, focusing on violent crimes and serious public safety issues is critical. Expanding surveillance for a largely cultural practice diverts attention and resources from areas where they are truly needed.

Fireworks are a vital part of Hawai‘i’s diverse cultural heritage, celebrated during events such as Chinese New Year, Filipino festivals, and local holidays. A regulatory approach can honor these traditions while protecting public safety:

- **Community Engagement:** Involving local communities in developing guidelines ensures that regulations are sensitive to cultural practices while addressing safety concerns. For instance, designated zones can both facilitate celebratory displays and reduce public disturbances.
- **Targeted Protections for Vulnerable Populations:** Specific measures—such as noise mitigation strategies and carefully timed displays—can protect those with respiratory conditions, PTSD, or other sensitivities without imposing a blanket ban on fireworks.

Enforcement should be focused on cases of clear negligence or criminal behavior rather than indiscriminately targeting all fireworks use:

- **Focused Enforcement:** Law enforcement should concentrate on incidents where fireworks usage blatantly violates safety standards or causes demonstrable harm. This approach minimizes the risk of infringing on the rights of responsible citizens.
- **Civil Liability Measures:** When negligence leads to harm, holding the responsible parties financially accountable can serve as a deterrent—without necessitating pervasive surveillance or criminalization of all fireworks activity.

While the safety of Hawai‘i’s residents is a shared priority, **HB806 in its current form is an overreach** that criminalizes a culturally significant practice and misdirects valuable public resources. A balanced, regulated framework offers a more effective and liberty-respecting solution. I respectfully urge the committee to reject the enforcement-heavy provisions of this bill in favor of measured, regulatory measures that safeguard both public safety and individual freedoms.

Sincerely,

Nicholas Zehr

HB-806-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 1:11:10 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/13/2025 9:30:00 AM



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Austin the Musical Chair	Testifying for The Libertarian Party of Hawaii	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha!

I am Austin, the Musical Chair, here today representing the Libertarian Party of Hawai'i, in support of this body continuing to slap their voters in the face. I really love how easy this makes my job.

Therefore, even though I am in opposition to this misguided policy, which appears to be part of a bigger scheme to grant the governor more power to use against the little people and normal folks, I kinda want you guys to pass it anyway - since it will make unseating you all that much easier when my candidates run against you.

For the few people in this room who actually care about Hawai'i, I would only say that this bill is not about fireworks safety, it's about expanding a police crackdown on the government's perceived enemies, funding vast & unconstitutional overreaches by police powers, spending obscene amounts of money to make Hawai'i worse, and to generally wage war on aloha-culture.

The bill is an insult to all Hawaiians.

The attempt to define and control Hawai'i's culture is wrong - and should be opposed... even though the strategic axiom here should be: "never interrupt your opponent when they are making a mistake."

So here I am, throwing away a perfectly good strategic advantage to plead with you all to stop oppressing my people - and stop trying to control Hawai'i's culture.

Sting operations, (which often rely on deception and often involve abuses of due process & other constitutional rights - for fireworks) - are a terrible idea, and will only increase anger at the government, so again, Mahalo.

Much love.

Austin Martin

Libertarian Party of Hawai'i - Chairman

