

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 222, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO FIREWORKS**
Before the House Committee on
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Thursday, March 13, 2025, 2:00 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 Senate Bill 222, Senate Draft 1. Act 67, Session Laws of Hawai'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, appropriate training, and targeted law enforcement operations, the Task Force has removed hundreds of thousands of pounds of illegal fireworks from Hawaii's communities. These ongoing operations and investigations have proven essential for public safety throughout the state.

This bill proposes to extend the sunset date of the Illegal Fireworks Task Force from June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2030, allowing this critical work to continue for an additional five years. The extended timeline will enable the Task Force to build on its early successes and implement more comprehensive strategies to combat illegal fireworks.

Additionally, the appropriation of funds requested in this bill is crucial for the Task Force to continue its operations effectively. These funds are necessary for administrative support staff, operational expenses, and reimbursement to law enforcement agencies for Task Force-related operations, including personnel costs, overtime, equipment, and the secure storage and disposal of confiscated fireworks.

The continuation of the Illegal Fireworks Task Force represents a vital investment in public safety across Hawaii, addressing persistent concerns about illegal fireworks that impact quality of life, pose fire hazards, and create risks to property and personal safety.

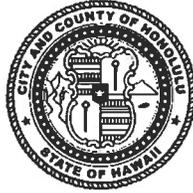
DLE recommends the following:

1. Amending page 1, line 2 by inserting \$1,265,000.

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

Dear Chair Tarnas and Members:

SUBJECT: Senate Bill No. 222, S.D. 1, Relating to Fireworks

I am Major Randall Platt of District 4 (Kailua/Kāne'ohe/Kahuku) of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD supports Senate Bill No. 222, S.D. 1, Relating to Fireworks.

The HPD supports this bill that aims to appropriate moneys for the Illegal Fireworks Task Force and extends the sunset date of the task force from June 30, 2025, to June 30, 2030. Act 67 will take effect on July 1, 2050.

The HPD urges you to support Senate Bill No. 222, S.D. 1, Relating to Fireworks.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RP", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Randall Platt, Major
District 4

APPROVED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Logan", written over a horizontal line.

Arthur J. Logan
Chief of Police

TESTIMONY OF
LARRY S VERAY

TO THE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB222 SD1

RELATED TO FIREWORKS

March 11, 2025

Aloha, Chair Tarnas, 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. **I am in STRONG SUPPORT OF SB222 SD1.**

Organized crime in Hawai'i continues to grow in their illegal fireworks sales to the public with underground sales of tons of illegal aerial fireworks and bombs throughout the islands. Of great concern, is the storage of all these fireworks throughout our neighborhoods.

I most strongly recommend you approve this bill and appropriate funds to support the Illegal Task Force operations and engagement planning.

Funds required for following:

- Support operating the Task Force, mission planning, surveillance equipment and fuel costs
- Hiring Administrative Staff
- Reimbursement of funds to Law Enforcement Agencies for personnel, overtime
- Funds to support storage and disposal of confiscated fireworks

You have an opportunity to set up the Task Force for Success in their mission by acquiring adequate funding to bring these criminals to justice and mitigate illegal fireworks use and sales in Hawai'i. Please approve SB222 SD1. Mahalo!

Larry S. Veray



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: March 12, 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 SB 222, SD1: Relating to Fireworks
Thursday, March 13, 2025, 2 p.m., Room 325 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for Senate Bill 222, SD1, which appropriates moneys for the Illegal Fireworks Task Force and extends the sunset date of the task force 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 SB222, SD1, support the work of our law enforcement agencies, and prevent future tragedies. Mahalo for your consideration.

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 12:29:00 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Austin Martin	The Libertarian Party of Hawaii	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha!

I am Austin, the Musical Chair, here today representing the Libertarian Party of Hawaii, 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 Hawaii, 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 Hawaii worse, and to generally wage war on aloha-culture.

The bill is an insult to all Hawaiians.

The attempt to define and control Hawaii'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 Hawaii's culture.

Much love.

Austin Martin

Libertarian Party of Hawaii - Chairman



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

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 11:25:09 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Allen Novak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I wish to testify in support of SB222.

Illegal fireworks is a serious problem in Hawai'i. The risk of fire, human and animal anxiety, and physical harm outweigh any claim that they have traditional value when used by unauthorized individuals.

However, since interdiction at the point of use by the consumer is difficult and impractical, the interdiction effort must be made at the ports of entry to be effective. Investigation must be made to determine not only the source of illegal fireworks entering our ports, but how and who is involved in illegal fireworks making it through the ports of entry. These are explosives and the means to detect them have long been available. Yet large quantities of illegal fireworks are able to be sold to the public.

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:23:58 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 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 SB222, SD1 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". **SB227, SD1** would establish the Illegal Fireworks Enforcement Division under the Department of Law Enforcement that would identify and provide the full-time dedication and staffing needed instead of just the current part-time commitment that **SB222, SD1** currently provides.

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 **SB222, SD1**.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 6:43:31 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Mahalo.

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 8:34:10 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I oppose this bill, waste of money, you need to use the current laws to catch criminals.

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:20:41 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 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.

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 9:24:27 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I write in strong OPPOSITION to this bill, which seeks to extend and further fund government enforcement measures against the use of fireworks in Hawai‘i. This bill expands the power of the state at the expense of personal freedom, responsible resource allocation, and community traditions.

1. Government Overreach and Erosion of Personal Liberties

This bill represents yet another example of government encroachment into the personal choices of individuals. Fireworks have long been a cultural and celebratory tradition in Hawai‘i, especially for New Year’s celebrations, Chinese New Year, and other significant events. The enforcement of fireworks bans disproportionately targets individuals exercising their right to celebrate in ways that do not infringe upon others’ rights. Penalizing peaceful celebrations in the name of "safety" is a slippery slope toward greater restrictions on personal freedoms.

2. Wasteful Use of Taxpayer Dollars

The bill seeks to appropriate an unspecified but presumably significant sum from the general revenues of the State to fund an expanded fireworks task force, including law enforcement overtime, storage, and disposal of confiscated fireworks. At a time when Hawai‘i faces pressing issues such as a housing crisis, rising cost of living, and failing infrastructure, it is unconscionable to allocate more taxpayer money toward policing what is, in most cases, a victimless activity.

Government resources should be directed toward real public safety concerns—violent crime, property crime, and economic stability—not used to fund enforcement measures against individuals engaging in voluntary celebrations.

3. Expanding Law Enforcement Powers Leads to Abuse and Overcriminalization

By extending the sunset date of the law from 2025 to 2030, this bill perpetuates a government task force with no clear endpoint. Historically, expanded police powers lead to unintended consequences, including selective enforcement, increased fines and penalties on working-class families, and unnecessary confrontations between law enforcement and citizens.

Hawai'i already has some of the strictest fireworks laws in the country. Additional crackdowns will not stop the underground market; they will only create more opportunities for selective enforcement while encouraging the rise of illicit sales and black-market activity.

4. A More Effective, Community-Based Approach

Instead of wasting taxpayer money on enforcement, the Legislature should consider alternative solutions that respect individual liberty while addressing legitimate concerns such as fire hazards and noise complaints. These could include:

- Designated community fireworks zones where individuals can legally use fireworks in a safe environment.
- Education and fire safety campaigns rather than increased criminal penalties.
- Decriminalization of consumer-grade fireworks while maintaining safety regulations on large commercial explosives. This will also ensure commercially available fireworks meet safety standards.

This bill is an unnecessary expansion of state power that will lead to wasted taxpayer money, government overreach, and further restrictions on individual freedoms. I urge this committee to reject this bill and instead pursue policies that respect personal responsibility, cultural traditions, and fiscal responsibility.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Nick Zehr

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 10:12:21 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel C. Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB222 SD1. Illegal fireworks, especially the "bombs" are a continuing problem. Therefore it make good sense to appropriate money for the Illegal Fireworks Task Force and extend its sunset date.

Daniel C. Smith

Pearl City

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 10:17:12 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

SUPPORT

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/11/2025 10:45:34 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
M. Leilani DeMello	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I OPPOSE this bill. Like SB 227, this bill is unnecessary. Let's focus on locking up the criminals that are apprehended for violent crimes and crimes against hard working families who lose personal property.

Mahalo,

M. Leilani DeMello

‘Ōla‘a, Puna, Hawai‘i

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 1:41:47 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Reeser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Committee Members on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs,

I am writing as a resident of Makawao, Maui, where we have been dealing with year-round fireworks (both illegal and legal) and homemade bombs detonating throughout our residential neighborhood. The explosions shake our houses and terrify our animals and elderly neighbors, some with PTSD. There is no way to predict when the explosions will hit and cannot be planned for. Even on July 4th and New Year's Eve, there are no drugs or options available to protect our families, pets and neighbors from the war zones taking place in our neighborhoods due to the power and quantity of these unsafe fireworks. It is not safe to go outside during these times as dangerous projectiles are everywhere, shooting into our houses, landing on fire on our roofs and yards. This is beyond dangerous so any tools that can be used to stop it must be implemented immediately as the crisis gets worse every year. There will be more preventable accidents and deaths if nothing is done. The last thing we need is for our insurance rates to rise because we continue to let this problem grow out of control.

Mahalo for doing your part,
Cheryl Reeser

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 3:24:24 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alan Urasaki	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support.

Mahalo



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

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Judiciary

RE: Testimony in Support of SB222 SD1: RELATING TO FIREWORKS

Dear Chairs Elefante and Rhoads, Vice Chairs Wakai and Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committees on Public Safety and Military Affairs and Judiciary,

The O'ahu County Committee (OCC) of O'ahu County Democrats is in support of SB222 SD1, RELATING TO FIREWORKS, which appropriates moneys for the Illegal Fireworks Task Force, extends the sunset date of the task force from 6/30/2025 to 6/30/2030, and is effective 7/1/2050 (SD1).

On Saturday, March 1, 2025, the OCC met to vote to support a variety of fireworks-related legislation that aim to propose solutions to tackle the threat of illegal fireworks in our neighborhoods. After the Aliamanu incident in January, the OCC swift action to task our Legislation Committee to research and monitor what ideas and proposals were being considered, and believe that this is one of many that would keep our residents safe and reduce the use of and minimize the presence of illegal fireworks in the State. The OCC stands behind you in supporting this bill and urges its passage to keep our communities safe and from illegal fireworks.

Mahalo for your consideration and we ask for your support of SB222 SD1.

Richard Mizusawa
Chair, Legislation Committee
O'ahu County Committee, Oahu County Democrats

SB-222-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/13/2025 9:20:00 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/13/2025 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mariano Castillo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose sb222