

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
RELATING TO FIREWORKS
Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS

LATE

Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 10:01 AM
State Capitol Conference Room 211, Via Videoconference

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) strongly supports Senate Bill 222. 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, successfully removing over 200,000 pounds of illegal fireworks from Hawaii's streets. The extension of the sunset date from June 30, 2025 to June 30, 2030, along with the additional funding for fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027, is crucial for maintaining this momentum and ensuring the continued effectiveness of our enforcement efforts.

The appropriation will support essential aspects of the Task Force operations, including the retention of necessary administrative support staff, ongoing task force operations, and reimbursement of funds to law enforcement agencies for task force-related activities. These funds cover critical expenses such as law enforcement personnel, overtime and other salary-related payments, charges for fuel, equipment, and the storage and disposal of confiscated fireworks.

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



Hawaiian Humane Society
People for animals. Animals for people.

Date: Feb. 10, 2025

To: Chair Sen. Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Vice Chair Sen. Sharon Y. Moriwaki,
and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

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

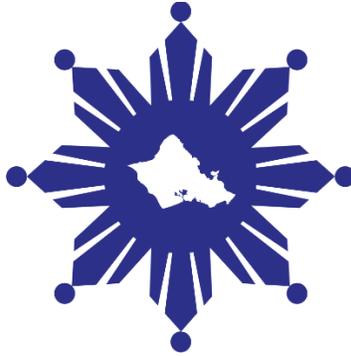
RE: Testimony in support of SB 222: Relating to Fireworks
Thursday, Feb. 12, 2025, 10:01 a.m., Room 211 & Videoconference

On behalf of the Hawaiian Humane Society, thank you for considering our support for Senate Bill 222, 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 SB222, support the work of our law enforcement agencies, and prevent future tragedies. Mahalo for your consideration.



**OAHU FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL
Honolulu, Hawaii**

February 11, 2025

Testimony in Support of SB222: Relating to Fireworks

To: Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means

From: Oahu Filipino Community Council

Date: Wednesday, February 12, 2025, 10:01 a.m.

Place: Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

Subject: Support for SB222 - Relating to Fireworks

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

The Oahu Filipino Community Council strongly supports SB222, 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 is critical for addressing the ongoing issue of illegal fireworks and ensuring the safety and well-being of our communities.

Key Points:

1. Continued Funding for the Illegal Fireworks Task Force:

- a. SB222 provides necessary funding for the illegal fireworks task force, enabling it to continue its important work in combating the illegal fireworks problem.
- b. The task force plays a crucial role in enforcing laws, conducting investigations, and coordinating efforts to reduce the use of illegal fireworks.

2. Extension of the Sunset Date:

- a. Extending the sunset date of the Act from 6/30/2025 to 6/30/2030 allows the task force to operate for an additional five years.
- b. This extension provides the necessary time to implement and refine strategies to effectively address the issue of illegal fireworks.

Arguments in Support:

1. Public Safety:

- a. Illegal fireworks pose significant risks to public safety, including the potential for injuries, fires, and property damage.
- b. By continuing to fund and support the illegal fireworks task force, SB222 helps protect residents and ensures safer communities.

2. Environmental Protection:

- a. Illegal fireworks contribute to environmental pollution, including air and noise pollution, and can harm wildlife.
- b. The task force's efforts to reduce illegal fireworks usage will help mitigate these negative environmental impacts.

3. Community Well-being:

- a. The use of illegal fireworks disrupts the peace and quality of life for many residents, especially those with pets, young children, and individuals with health conditions.
- b. Supporting the task force's work aligns with our commitment to enhancing the overall well-being of our communities.

We believe that SB222 is an important measure that supports the continued efforts of the illegal fireworks task force, ensuring public safety, environmental protection, and community well-being. We urge the Committee to favorably consider SB222 and support its passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Melodie Aduja

Chair, Social Action Committee

Director, Oahu Filipino Community Council

Testimony in Favor of SB222

Dear Legislators:

It is way past time that we have a serious task force to investigate illegal fireworks. Illegal Fireworks are a scourge on our society. They are dangerous, can cause wild fires and are an intrusion into our solitude. Here, on Maui, they used to occur only on 4th of July and New Years. Now they often intrude a month or so ahead of the holidays and after and some violators set off large bombs now year-round.

Respectfully Submitted

Gary Elster

12 Malihini place

Wailuku, HI 96793

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:40:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support this measure as it helps to curb the use of illegal fireworks in Hawai'i. In spite of claims to the contrary, arial **fireworks are not a cultural tradition** and they present a fire, health and nuisance hazard to the community.

Additionally, I wish to testify that enforcement at the consumer level will be minimally effective in reducing the use of fireworks. **Interdiction must be at the bottleneck entry point of the docks to be effective.** Since fireworks are explosives, effective detection methods are readily available. Such interdiction will require identification of those individuals who have been and are involved in allowing illegal fireworks to pass through our ports. **This measure should be amended to specify interdiction at the ports and identification of individuals involved.**

Allen Novak

Hilo, Hawaii

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 8:48:21 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

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

Hawai'i Kai

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 12:41:41 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please continue to fund the fireworks task force. In addition I recommend that the bill be amended to provide funding for drone led "fireworks" shows on New Year's Eve and 4th of July in every county. Illegal fireworks will not go away as long as people want to use them. But when people become accustomed to seeing displays that are far superior and more entertaining than explosive fireworks, they will, over time, lose interest in exploding fireworks themselves. Give the people something better!

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:53:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB222. My name is Natalie Graham-Wood and I live at Sunset Beach, Oahu.

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:59:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

We need to support this bill and ensure that HPD and Polic Chief enforce reported illegal fireworks. No one will stop the use of illegal fireworks if this is not enforced.

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 4:09:30 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Senator Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Senator Moriwaki and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means.

Please vote for SB 222, which I strongly support, to help the Illegal Fireworks Task Force.

Mahalo.

Jennifer Chiwa

Makiki and life long resident of Oahu

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:16:12 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Please support this bill to continue funding for the illegal fireworks taskforce that enforces the seizure and selling of illegal fireworks. The New Years Eve 2025 Fireworks explosion in Pearl City is already a painful lesson Hawaii has learned on the devastating effects fireworks has property, economic loss and human loss.

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:05:07 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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.

Renee Rabb

Keaau, HI 96749

Big Island

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 5:57:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Am writing in support of SB222 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**

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:06:59 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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.

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:04:54 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

I STRONGLY SUPPORT SB222 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** 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 the current part-time commitment that **SB222** 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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify

SB-222

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 11:52:56 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/12/2025 10:01:00 AM

LATE

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

Comments:

Strongly support