



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
State Fire Council
830 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

February 3, 2009

The Honorable Faye Hanohano, Chair
Committee on Public Safety
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 303
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Hanohano:

Subject: H.B. 688 Relating to Fire Protection

I am Kenneth G. Silva, Chair of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD). The SFC and the HFD support H.B. 688, which proposes to eliminate the two-year requirement for county fire departments to inspect buildings and properties, except public schools, which are inspected annually, and state airports, which are the responsibility of the state.

This bill would allow a county fire department to inspect buildings according to its fire and life safety risk. As our state community and population continue to grow, fire department personnel have not increased proportionately, thus making it difficult, if not impossible, to inspect all buildings in two years.

Thorough and complete fire inspections reduce the risk of fire but are time-consuming because repeated follow-up inspections are conducted until full compliance is achieved. Fire departments can utilize their limited resources most efficiently and effectively by focusing on higher-risk occupancies, such as assemblies and high-rises.

In addition to inspecting privately-owned buildings and facilities, county fire departments are tasked with conducting inspections of state and county facilities, including public schools, harbors, state university properties, and government institutions and offices without the assistance from a State Fire Marshal's office, which does not exist. Several states, such as Colorado, Rhode Island, and Washington, have statutes that prioritize fire inspections based upon life safety risk.

The Honorable Faye Hanohano, Chair
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The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's support on the passage of H.B. 688.

Should you have any questions, please call HFD Legislative Liaison Lloyd Rogers at 723-7171.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kenneth G. Silva".

KENNETH G. SILVA
Chair

KGS/LR:cn

Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Mayor

Robert F. Westerman
Fire Chief

John T. Blalock
Deputy Fire Chief



COUNTY OF KAUAI
Fire Department
Mo'ikeha Building
4444 Rice Street, Suite 295
Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii 96766

February 3, 2009

The Honorable Faye Hanohano, Chair
Committee on Public Safety
House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 303
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Hanohano:

Subject: H.B. 688 Relating to Fire Protection

I am Robert F. Westerman, member of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Kauai Fire Department (KFD). The SFC and the KFD support H.B. 688, which proposes to eliminate the two-year requirement for county fire departments to inspect buildings and properties, including state, county, and commercial buildings, except state airports and public schools, which are annual inspections. The state is responsible for inspecting state airports. This bill would allow the county fire departments to inspect buildings according to its fire and life safety risk. As our state community and population continue to grow, fire department personnel have not increased proportionately, thus making it difficult, if not impossible, to inspect all buildings in two years. Thorough and complete fire inspections reduce the risk of fire, but are time consuming requiring repeated follow-up inspections until full compliance is achieved. Focusing on higher-risk occupancies, such as assemblies and high-rises, fire departments can utilize their limited resources efficiently and effectively.

In addition to inspecting privately-owned buildings and facilities, county fire departments are tasked with providing inspections of state and county facilities, including public schools, harbors, state university properties, and government institutions and offices without the assistance from a State Fire Marshal's office, which does not exist. Several states, such as Colorado, Rhode Island, and Washington, have statutes that prioritize fire inspections based upon life safety risk.

The SFC and the KFD urge your committee's support on the passage of H.B. 688.

Should you have any questions, please call me at 241-4980.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robert F. Westerman', written over a horizontal line.

Robert F. Westerman
Fire Chief

RFW/crz