



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

February 11, 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. 927 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. 927, which proposes to prohibit retail sales or the distribution of novelty lighters.

Novelty lighters contain features that are attractive to children, including visual effects, flashing lights, musical sounds, or toy-like designs. Since 1996, the Consumer Product Safety Commission has recalled thousands of novelty lighters due to their danger to public safety. Juvenile fire setting has been identified as the fastest growing fire threat in the U.S. More than 300 people have been killed, of which 30 percent were children, and almost \$1 billion in property was destroyed.

During 2003-2007 in the City and County of Honolulu, fires caused by children playing with lighters resulted in an estimated \$1,284,100 in property and content damages, three fire fatalities, and six injuries.

Many local and national public safety agencies support prohibiting the sale and distribution of novelty lighters, including the National Fire Protection Association, the Western Fire Chiefs Association, and the National Association of State Fire Marshals. The function of a lighter can be achieved without the novelty attraction to children. There is no logical reason for lighters to be made to attract greater curiosity and invite dangerous behavior, which can result in tragedy and destruction.

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The SFC and the HFD urge your committee's support on the passage of H.B. 927.

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:bh

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
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawaii 96766

February 10, 2009

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

Dear Chair Hanohano:

Subject: H.B. 927 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. 927, which proposes to ban retail sales or the distribution of novelty lighters in the state. Novelty lighters have features which are attractive to children, including visual effects, flashing lights, musical sounds, or toy-like designs. The Consumer Product Safety Commission has recalled thousands of novelty lighters since 1996 due to their danger to public safety. Juvenile fire setting has been identified as the fastest growing fire threat in the United States with more than 300 people killed, 30 percent being children, and almost \$1 billion in property destroyed.

During the years 2003-2007, property and content damage from fires where children were playing with lighters were estimated at \$1,284,100 in the City and County of Honolulu. There were three fire fatalities and six injured during this period caused by children playing with lighters.

Many local and national public safety agencies support the prohibition of the sale and distribution of novelty lighters, the National Fire Protection Agency, Western Fire Chiefs Association, and the National Association of State Fire Marshals are supporting this issue. The function of a lighter can be achieved without the novelty attraction to children. There is no logical reason for lighters to be made to attract greater curiosity and invite dangerous behavior that results in tragedy and destruction.

The SFC and the KFD urge your committee's support on the passage of H.B. 927. Should you have any questions, please call me at 241-4980.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Westerman".

Robert F. Westerman
Fire Chief

RFW/LR:cz