



**TESTIMONY OF THE STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE, 2009**

---

**ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

S.B. NO. 848, RELATING TO METAL.

**BEFORE THE:**

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

**DATE:** Friday, March 27, 2009 **TIME:** 2:00 PM

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 325

**TESTIFIER(S):** Mark J. Bennett, Attorney General  
or Lance M. Goto, Deputy Attorney General

---

Chair Karamatsu and Members of the Committee:

The Attorney General strongly supports this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to remove the sunset provision of Act 197, Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, and continue the requirements for the purchase of copper by scrap dealers, along with the other provisions of the act, intended to address the problem of copper thefts, including the theft of copper offense.

This bill also addresses the repeal and reenactment provision of section 6 of Act 53, Session Laws of Hawaii 2008, to preserve the Act 197 amendments. Act 53 made amendments to sections 445-231 and 445-233 of the Hawaii Revises Statutes and provided for the repeal and reenactment of those sections on July 1, 2009, in the form in which those sections read on the day before the effective date of Act 197.

Copper thefts have had a great impact on the residents of Hawaii. Copper thieves have dismantled street lights, caused power outages, and caused the closure of parks and other facilities. One attempted theft resulted in the death of an individual.

Act 197 took a two-pronged approach to the problem by: (1) establishing theft of copper as a felony offense; and (2) imposing additional requirements on scrap dealers and those that sell copper to scrap dealers to deter the sale of stolen copper. A two-year sunset date, of July 1, 2009, was placed on the Act 197

amendments to allow for an assessment of the Act's effectiveness. During the short period of time that the amendments have been in place, they have had a positive impact and have greatly facilitated the investigation and prosecution of copper theft offenses. Maintaining the provisions of Act 197 will help authorities address the problem of copper theft and the numerous and costly problems that such thefts cause to our communities and the public.

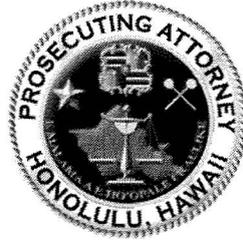
We respectfully request passage of this measure.

DEPARTMENT OF THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

ALII PLACE  
1060 RICHARDS STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 547-7400 • FAX: (808) 547-7515

PETER B. CARLISLE  
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

Douglas S. Chin  
FIRST DEPUTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY



**THE HONORABLE JON RIKI KARAMATSU, CHAIR**  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**  
**Twenty-fifth State Legislature**  
**Regular Session of 2009**  
**State of Hawai'i**

March 27, 2009

**RE: S.B. 848; RELATING TO METAL.**

Chair Karamatsu and members of the House Committee on Judiciary, the Department of the Prosecuting Attorney submits the following testimony in support of Senate Bill 848.

The purpose of this bill is to remove the July 1, 2009 sunset from Act 197 of 2007 and make the provisions of Act 197 of 2007 and its subsequent amendments permanent.

In 2007, the legislature passed Act 197 which created a class C offense for the theft of a pound or more of copper. In addition, Act 197 also established: 1) requirements for documenting the purchase of copper by scrap dealers; and 2) enhanced penalties for violations of the licensing and documentation requirements for scrap dealers. This law has proven extremely effective in aiding law enforcement in investigating and prosecuting copper theft cases.

Most recently, members of a major copper theft ring were indicted for copper theft. The ring is alleged to have stolen 72,000 pounds of copper wiring from the H-1 and H-2 freeways; the thefts caused millions of dollars in damages and posed safety concerns for motorists as parts of the freeways were left in the dark for months. We've also used the copper theft law in other instances including a case in which copper wiring was stolen several times from West Loch Golf Course by the same defendant.

We believe that in the short period of time this law has been in effect, that it has been tremendously useful in combating and deterring copper theft. For this reason, we respectfully request your favorable consideration of this bill and thank you for this opportunity to testify.

POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

801 SOUTH BERETANIA STREET · HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
TELEPHONE: (808) 529-3111 · INTERNET: www.honolulu.org

MDF HANNEMANN  
MAYOR



BOISSE P. CORREA  
CHIEF

PAUL D. PUTZLU  
KARLA A. GODSEY  
DEPUTY CHIEFS

OUR REFERENCE TK-MK

March 27, 2009

The Honorable Jon Riki Karamatsu, Chair  
and Members  
Committee on Judiciary  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Karamatsu and Members:

Subject: Senate Bill No. 848, Relating to Metal

I am Captain Terrence Kong, of District 5, of the Honolulu Police Department, City and County of Honolulu.

The Honolulu Police Department supports Senate Bill No. 848, Relating to Metal.

The requirements of Act 197 have contributed to the decrease in copper thefts on the island of Oahu. In 2006, there were 426 cases reported to the Honolulu Police Department with a value of \$935,773. In 2007, there were 266 cases reported with a value of \$959,862. In 2008, there were only 84 cases reported with a value of \$297,432.

The copper theft problem that has plagued the islands has decreased because of public awareness, legislation, and enforcement efforts. I strongly recommend passage of Senate Bill No. 848. Thank you for allowing me to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terrence Kong".

TERRENCE KONG, Captain  
District 5

APPROVED:

for: A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Boisse P. Correa".  
BOISSE P. CORREA  
Chief of Police

# Testimony before the House Committee on Judiciary

By Jim Beavers  
Manager, Safety, Security and Facilities  
Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.

March 27, 2009  
2:00 p.m.  
Senate Bill 848  
Relating to Metal

Chair Karamatsu, Vice Chair Ito, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jim Beavers and I am testifying on behalf of the Hawaiian Electric Company and its subsidiaries, Hawaii Electric Light Company and Maui Electric Company.

We strongly **support** SB 848, which removes the sunset clause in Act 197 on those provisions enacted to deter the sale of stolen copper. Since the passage of these provisions, which made the theft of copper a new criminal offense and which placed stringent requirements on scrap dealers and sellers of copper, Hawaiian Electric Company has seen a reduction in the amount of copper theft incidents. The result has been reduced inconvenienced to our customers and a reduction of the risk of injury and/or death to those that attempt to steal copper from our facilities since they are energized at very high voltages. We have experienced incidents in the past where thieves have been seriously injured while attempting to steal copper from our facilities.

For all the reasons stated above, we strongly support this bill.



# THE LEGISLATIVE CENTER

820 MILILANI STREET, SUITE 810  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2938  
PHONE: (808) 537-4308 • FAX: (808)533-2739

March 27, 2009

Testimony To: House Committee on Judiciary  
Representative Jon Riki Karamatsu, Chair

Presented By: Tim Lyons, Legislative Liaison  
Anheuser Busch Companies

Subject: S.B. 848 – RELATING TO METAL

Chair Karamatsu and Members of the Committee:

I am Tim Lyons, Legislative Liaison for Anheuser Busch Companies and we support this bill with an amendment.

S.B. 1128 sought to renew the law passed by the 2008 legislature on the theft of beer kegs. We hope you will use this opportunity to amend S.B. 848 to include the content of S.B. 1128 in this bill.

Thank you for your support.