

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2652

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 16 2024

RE: S.B. No. 2808
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs, to which was referred S.B. No. 2808 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO STATEWIDE FIRE HELICOPTERS,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Establish a Statewide Firefighting Helicopter Program, to be administered by the State Fire Marshal;
- (2) Appropriate funds to obtain helicopters, facilities equipment, and supplies; hire and train staff; and do other things necessary to ensure that the program is ready to begin providing aerial firefighting services on July 1, 2025; and
- (3) Establish that this measure only takes effect if another bill is passed that establishes a State Fire Marshal position.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Department of Health, Maui Chamber of Commerce, Hawaiian Electric, and one individual.



Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and Department of the Attorney General.

Your Committee finds that Hawaii's unique status as an island state, positioned thousands of miles away from the nearest continent, makes addressing wildfires challenging. Your Committee further finds that equipped with state-of-the-art technology, helicopters can deliver targeted water drops, fire retardant, and other firefighting agents with precision, maximizing the effectiveness of suppression efforts in the event of a wildfire. This measure will fortify Hawaii's resilience against the growing threat of wildfires, enhance overall emergency response capabilities, and safeguard the well-being of residents and visitors by establishing a Statewide Firefighting Helicopter Program.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

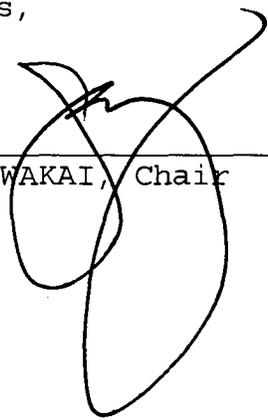
- (1) Replacing the terms "firefighting aircraft", "aerial firefighting assets", and "aerial firefighting aircraft" with the term "firefighting helicopter";
- (2) Replacing the term "department" with "State Fire Marshal";
- (3) Clarifying that the appropriations shall be expended to administer the Statewide Firefighting Helicopter Program; and
- (4) Inserting an effective date of January 1, 2042, to encourage further discussion.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2808, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2808, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



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Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Public Safety and
Intergovernmental and Military
Affairs,



GLENN WAKAI, Chair



