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STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

*Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai*

715 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL 2174, HOUSE DRAFT 2  
RELATING TO SEARCH AND RESCUE

Before the Senate Committees on  
Public Safety and Intergovernmental and Military Affairs  
and Water and Land

Wednesday, March 20, 2024; 3:00 p.m.

State Capitol Conference Room 225, Via Videoconference

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

Chairs Wakai and Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committees:

The Department of Law Enforcement (DLE) **supports** House Bill 2174, House Draft 2.

This bill changes the circumstances when an agency may seek reimbursement for search and rescue costs by providing guidance on when such costs can be recovered and requiring agencies to seek reimbursement.

State law enforcement is regularly called upon to participate in search and rescue operations for people who have ignored posted warnings, left defined hiking trails, and ventured into closed areas that have been posted. These situations typically do not involve standard search and rescue of lost or injured persons which are anticipated and part of expected operations of first responders. These are situations created by reason of an individual's choice to ignore posted warnings and efforts of government agencies or private landowners to keep them safe. When first responders are called upon to engage in these types of extensive search and rescue operations, ongoing operations must be put on hold and agencies often incur additional unbudgeted costs and expense through overtime, calling in additional responders, and costs of equipment and supplies. Requiring agencies to pursue reimbursement in these situations is a reasonable requirement.

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

**HB-2174-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2024 11:25:41 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/20/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Mahalo.

**HB-2174-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 11:44:06 AM

Testimony for PSM on 3/20/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacqueline S. Ambrose	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Yes to repealing the existing conditions under which government entities may seek reimbursement for search or rescue expenses and instead requires a government entity of the State to impose and collect a fee for search or rescue expenses for persons who require rescue after leaving a hiking trail to enter an area closed to the public or hiking on a trail closed to the public, with a sign giving notice of the closure. Requires a report or documentation of the search and rescue to be submitted to the Department of the Attorney General.

**HB-2174-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/16/2024 3:37:13 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/20/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support. This measure is long overdue. Taxpayers should not be saddled with the burden of paying for the acts of the reckless, who often ignore warnings. Their lack of judgement also endangers first responders and others. That is wrong.

**HB-2174-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/17/2024 1:23:21 PM

Testimony for PSM on 3/20/2024 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keoni Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I stand in support of HB2174.

Growing up in Kaneohe, seeing HFD’s rescuing illegal hikers from the “Stairway to Heaven” has become a regular event, as well as seeing illegal hikers going up to, and coming down from, the trail while they transverse through private property and locked gates.

Also, having previously worked in the conservation field working for DLNR’s Department of Forestry, I have first hand knowledge and experience traversing state trails throughout the island of Oahu on a regular basis. Having spent an abundant amount of time on state trails, I have come to the conclusion that there are more than enough State trails to satisfy any hiker’s desires to be in nature or to see lovely views from the mountain ranges. Those that leave a properly maintained trail, do so believing that they are entitled to go into an off-limit area and because of this, they should be penalized, as well as cover the costs of their rescue. There should be a standard penalty that goes along with the rescue costs..

There is absolutely no reason why any hiker on Oahu should feel the need to go off-trail or into a closed location, off-limits to the public. Because of this, I support this bill and feel that anyone who is not on a properly maintained state hiking trail, should be responsible for reimbursing the expenses related to a rescue.

Thus, I support this bill, and hope that you consider adding in a penalization fee as an amendment, for going off-trail.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Keoni Shizuma