



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

10:17 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

In Support

Senate Bill No. 2645, SD2, Relating to Fire Prevention.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of the Governor is in support of S.B. No. 2645, SD2, Relating to Fire Prevention.

This measure would ensure county compliance with minimum statewide fire code standards and require that all proposed amendments to county fire codes be submitted to the State Fire Marshal for review and approval. Additionally, the measure establishes the State Fire and Life Safety Special Fund, to be administered by the Office of the State Fire Marshal. S.B. No. 2645, SD2, identifies funding sources that may be deposited into the fund and specifies the purposes for which the funds may be expended.

Further, this measure is intended to improve operational efficiency and better align statutory requirements with the duties and responsibilities of the State Fire Marshal and the Office of the State Fire Marshal. In particular, the measure amends the frequency of fire and life safety inspections for state facilities to allow for timely and effective oversight, while reducing administrative burdens associated with conducting annual inspections across a large inventory of state facilities.

S.B. No. 2645, SD2, also amends the selection process for the State Fire Marshal to provide a more streamlined and timely appointment process. Lastly, the measure updates the statutory positions within the Office of the State Fire Marshal by establishing four assistant fire marshal positions to better reflect the operational needs and scope of responsibility of the office.

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Overall, the amendments contained in bill are intended to improve statutory frameworks, strengthen statewide consistency in fire and life safety standards, and more clearly align the structure and function of the Office of the State Fire Marshal with its core public safety mission.

For these reasons, the Office respectfully requests that this Committee pass this bill. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2645, SENATE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO FIRE PREVENTION
Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS
Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 10:17 AM
State Capitol Conference Room 211
WRITTEN TESTIMONY of Dorothy Booth

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee:

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) supports Senate Bill 2645, Senate Draft 2. Senate Bill 2645, SD2, is a comprehensive measure that addresses several significant aspects of fire safety governance in Hawaii. The bill establishes the State Fire Code as the minimum statewide standard for fire safety, prohibits counties from adopting or enforcing ordinances less restrictive than the State Fire Code, establishes the State Fire and Life Safety Special Fund, limits the frequency of fire and safety inspections at state facilities to once every three years, changes the method of appointment of the State Fire Marshal from the State Fire Marshal Selection Commission to gubernatorial appointment with Senate confirmation, and amends Act 302, SLH 2025, by replacing inspector and investigator positions with four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) assistant fire marshal positions.

OSFM supports the provision establishing the State Fire Code as the minimum statewide standard for fire safety and prohibiting counties from adopting, amending, or enforcing any ordinance, rule, or code provision that is less restrictive than the State

Fire Code. A uniform, statewide minimum standard is essential to ensuring consistent fire and life safety protections for all residents and visitors across Hawaii's counties. Allowing local jurisdictions to adopt standards below the State Fire Code creates unacceptable disparities in public safety and undermines the integrity of a cohesive statewide fire safety framework.

OSFM also supports the establishment of the State Fire and Life Safety Special Fund. A dedicated special fund would provide a stable and reliable funding mechanism to support the OSFM's critical fire prevention, inspection, investigation, and public education functions. Sustainable funding is essential for the OSFM to fulfill its statutory responsibilities effectively and to respond to the growing demands placed upon the office.

Regarding the amendment to Act 302, SLH 2025, the OSFM supports consolidating fire inspector and fire investigator positions into four full-time equivalent (4.0 FTE) assistant fire marshal positions. This restructuring reflects the multifaceted operational realities of the OSFM, where personnel are often required to perform both inspection and investigative functions. The assistant fire marshal classification provides greater operational flexibility and better aligns personnel resources with the OSFM's mission to protect life and property from fire throughout the State of Hawaii.

The OSFM remains committed to working collaboratively with the Legislature and all stakeholders to ensure that SB 2645, SD2, is implemented in a manner that strengthens fire and life safety protections statewide.

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