

HONOLULU EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

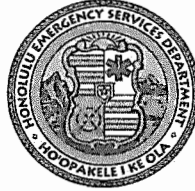
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE ULIA PŌPILIKIA O HONOLULU

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

3375 KOAPAKA STREET, SUITE H450 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96819

PHONE: (808) 723-7800 • FAX: (808) 723-7836 • WEBSITE: <https://emergencyservices.honolulu.gov/>

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA



JAMES H.E. IRELAND, M.D.
DIRECTOR
PO'O

IAN T. T. SANTEE, MPA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

June 27, 2024

The Honorable Val Okimoto, Chair
and Members

Committee on Public Safety
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Okimoto and Members:

SUBJECT: Bill 22 (24) Relating to the Fire Code

The Honolulu Emergency Medical Services, a division of the Honolulu Emergency Services Department, respectfully opposes Bill 22 in its current form. Honolulu EMS is the lead pre-hospital emergency medical provider on the island of O'ahu. During the days leading up to New Year's Day and during the days following, EMS paramedics and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) consistently respond to emergency calls for patients with respiratory problems due to smoke from fireworks. Smoke from fireworks can compound pre-existing health conditions, increasing the chances of hospitalization and or death, especially among our kūpuna.

Following the ban in 2011, statistics on fireworks related calls show a decrease in both breathing-related problems and injuries. In 2022, EMS responded to 25 calls for breathing issues and 12 fireworks related injuries during the overnight hours of New Year's Eve. In 2023, EMS crews responded to nine patients experiencing respiratory problems and seven injuries from fireworks. Honolulu EMS is encouraged by this downward trend and has great concern that allowing consumer fireworks to be purchased will derail this positive decline in 911 calls. The HESD strongly believes the entertainment of these fireworks does not outweigh the great risks to life and property and humbly asks the City Council to vote this bill down.

The Honorable Val Okimoto, Chair
and Members
Committee on Public Safety
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Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Should you have any questions, please contact me at (808) 723-7800 or james.ireland@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

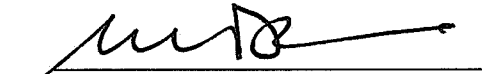
FOR 

Digitally signed by Ian T.T.
Santee

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James H.E. Ireland, M.D.
Director

APPROVED:


Michael D. Formby
Managing Director