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STATE FIRE COUNCIL (SFC)  
FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2024-2025 3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTER MEETING MINUTES

Date and Time: January 27, 2025, 9:00 a.m. *(Corrected p.m. to a.m. per May 6, meeting)*

Place: Meeting held in person and via audioconferencing pursuant to HRS § 92-3.7. Remote meeting by interactive conference technology; notice; quorum. Effective: January 1, 2022

Present:

Kazuo Todd	SFC Chair and Fire Chief of the Hawaii County Fire Department (HCFD), Hawaii County
Bradford Ventura	SFC Member and Fire Chief of the Maui Department of Fire and Public Safety (MFD), Maui County
Michael Gibson	SFC Member and Fire Chief of the Kauai Fire Department (KFD), Kauai County
Michael Walker	SFC Member and Fire Protection Forester Division of Forestry and Wildlife (DOFAW) Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) State of Hawaii
Hiroyuki Takei	Deputy Attorney General (AG) Department of the Attorney General, State of Hawaii
Gary Lum	SFC Administrative Specialist III (AS)
Michael O'Sullivan	Reduced Ignition Propensity Cigarette (RIPC) Administrator
Carol Suzuki	Secretary

Absent:

Sheldon Hao	SFC Vice Chair and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department (HFD) City and County of Honolulu
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Martinez Jacobs      SFC Member and Airports Fire Chief  
Hawaii                      Airports Division, Transportation Department (ARFF), State of

Socrates Bratakos      SFC Administrative Specialist II

Guests:

Li-Ann Yamashiro      Deputy Attorney General (AG)  
Department of the Attorney General, State of Hawaii

Chavonnie Ramos      Public Information Officer  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)  
State of Hawaii

Pao-Chi Hwang      Battalion Chief, Fire Prevention Bureau  
Honolulu Fire Department, City & County of Honolulu

Bryan Imai      Government Relations Manager  
International Code Council

Gary Honold      Regional Director, Northwest Division  
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)

Raelene Tenno      Principal Officer  
Hawaii Council of Associations of Apartment Owners

KHON2 News      Recording

K. Johnson

I. Introduction

A. The meeting was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

B. Introduction of Attendees and Public Comments

Attendees introduced themselves; Chair Todd read an email message from the Hawaii Council of Community Associations, residential fire safety advisory committee (per Reso 17195, CD1 that established a committee in 2018). AS Lum read the attached letter to the email (a letter dated August 6, 2024) addressed to Honolulu City Council Chair Waters and Council Members, relating to concerns about the mobility vulnerable resident form for condos to be submitted to the HFD.

Ms. Tenno reported that after the Lahaina fires, she was asked by the Office of Aging why there was no condo building evacuation plans for mobility impaired people.

Chair Todd said there is an existing fire code for evacuation, and the concern may primarily be an issue on Oahu, as there are very few high-rise buildings on the neighbor islands.

BC Hwang explained that a mobility evacuation plan is an option and is not mandatory. Any mobility plan can be sent to HFD for review. He will touch bases with his subject matter experts and join in on a future SFC meeting to report his findings.

Mr. Honold gave his input based on NFPA 1. There are no specifics addressed; only addresses areas of refuge. It is recommended to have a plan in place to help mobility impaired in emergencies. City classifies condos as commercial and not residential in the City and County of Honolulu. Honold will ask his experts if it will make a difference to have condos reclassified and rezoned residential.

C. Approval of the SFC FY 2025 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Meeting Minutes of November 8, 2024.

**Motion:** To approve the November 8, 2024 meeting minutes.

All members voted to approve the Nov. 8, 2024 minutes. The motion was carried.

D. Approval of the agenda.

**Motion:** To add Bills on the list presented at the meeting.

All members present voted in favor of accepting the agenda with the addition of bills for discussion. The motion was carried.

I. Old Business

A. State Fire Marshal appointment

1. General discussion of State Fire Marshal selection process.

After the meeting on January 14, 2025, in which a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) was formed to review the fourteen applications received, we were informed that a few.

more applications were received. The AG's office recommended dissolving the existing PIG, and to start the process over in order to consider more applicants.

**Motion:** To dissolve the Permitted Interaction Group that was assembled at the January 14, 2025 meeting.

All members present were in favor of the motion as stated.

2. **Motion:** To temporarily adjourn the meeting to move into Executive Session based on Section 92-5(a)(2), HRS.

All members present voted in favor of accepting the motion; the motion was carried.

At 9:32 a.m. the meeting temporarily adjourned; the meeting resumed at 9:53 a.m.

3. Formation of a Permitted Interaction Group (PIG) to facilitate selection of a State Fire Marshal.

Members present verified that they do not know anyone on the applicant list. Chair Todd summarized that a PIG was established, and that there are fourteen applicants.

**Motion:** To establish a PIG consisting of three members to review the fourteen applications received to date, and create a short list of candidates for presentation to the SFC at a later meeting, followed by another meeting to set up interviews.

All members present voted in favor of accepting the motion; the motion was carried.

The Chair asked for two to three volunteers to serve on the PIG, to take a deep dive into applications submitted. The following SFC members volunteered to serve on the PIG: Michael Walker, Bradford Ventura, and Michael Gibson.

PIG will be authorized to research applicants by reaching out to verify information submitted in applications. After having verified information, present to the full board their recommendations of three to seven applicants to be interviewed at a later date.

The PIG is further delegated to investigate processes and potential interview questions for assessment to report to the board at the next meeting.

B. NFPA Update

Honold reported that he worked with an internal team to track amendments. He has scheduled the State Fire Prevention Committee to take Terra software training to integrate building code amendments, and track them through to the adoption process. He is working on scheduling the training. The system will hold the NFPA documents separately; from the promulgation process, to when Hawaii documents are folded in. He will send an NFPA link to test the system to make sure all users can view the Hawaii State code. The committee should be able to complete the process by mid-March.

Honold is still forming that technical committee for the NFPA 800 battery standards.

- C. Status update on County amendment adoption of the 2021 State Fire Code.

The meeting took a break at 10:09 a.m., and resumed at 10:20 a.m.

- D. O'Sullivan presented his Reduced Ignition Propensity Cigarette (RIPC) report, which included the financial status. Discussion topics included increasing fees collected from cigarette manufacturers to cover the cost of testing.

- 1. **Motion:** Increase fee from \$375 to \$500 per brand and style in accordance with Hawaii Revised Statute §132C-4.

All members voted in favor of the motion to accept the increase in fees to manufacturers. The motion was carried.

- 2. O'Sullivan is working on refining the testing process.

### III. New Business

- A. NFPA Update.

No report in consideration of the lengthy list of topics in B. Honold will have an update at the next SFC meeting.

- B. Review of 2025 Legislative Bills

- 1. HB 1, amends responsibilities of the State Building Code Council (SBCC).

Discussion: The SFC will no longer be adopting the State fire code. SFC would be making recommendations to counties. Implication is that bill will delay adoption of code. Purpose for SBCC to adopt code was to standardize codes. Page 4, 18 and 19, Section 107-25—this bill removes responsibility from the SBCC. When code comes out, State code is building code without further adoption by council and SFC makes recommendations to counties.

Brian Imai said that HB 120 is a similar bill in which the AG raises the same concerns. SBCC opposes the measure.

- 2. HB 55, converts certain fireworks-related offenses from misdemeanors to Class C felonies.

**Motion:** To accept all firework related bills; SFC will support.

All members present agreed, the motion was carried.

- 3. HB 83, increases penalties for certain firework violations and establishes higher penalties for any subsequent violation.

HFD enforces the fire code on legal fireworks for licensed users. Violations referred to in this bill are for illegal use of fireworks and illegal imports. The SFC recommends changing Sec. 4 to police departments to receive funding for investigation and enforcement efforts as fire departments have no enforcement powers for illegal fireworks use.

4. HB 113, requires certain owners and occupants of properties located in hazardous fire areas to maintain effective firebreaks within thirty feet of the property and to practice other fire prevention activities.

While intent is good, SFC sees multiple issues with this bill, i.e., vague on who would carry out the work, and how will it be handled. SFC supports ability to address wildfires. There are no positions and funding attached. Takes DLIR out of what it is responsible for.

5. HB 187, increases fines that may be assessed against certain fireworks-related violation.

SFC is in support of bills that reduce the use of illegal fireworks in the State.

6. HB 200, imposes a statewide limitation on consumer fireworks, except by permit for use at cultural events.

Change "use at cultural events" to "cultural use".

Meeting recessed for lunch at 12:05 p.m.; the meeting resumed at 12:57 p.m.

7. HB 201, supplements salary of the State Fire Marshal.

The SFC supports this bill.

8. HB 361, requires the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to: (1) Adopt the Nations Incident Management System....

No comments

9. HB 367, allows for building permit exemptions for certain kinds of activities.

Discussion: Chair expressed that this bill may lead to fire hazard issues as bill exemptions allow too much. Hwang asked if small repairs have to be reviewed by the HFD? DPP vets plans and determines if plans need to be referred to HFD for review. If DPP no longer vets plans, HFD will be inundated with plans to review. Potential ramifications is with structures that spread fire if permits are not necessary. (?)

10. HB 415, amends the sunset date of Act 83, Session Laws of Hawaii 2012, to repeal section 46-19.8, HRS, on June 29, 2025.



Discussion: AG's office weighed in if there were any issues with this bill.

As time is of essence, SFC will establish a priority to addressing the remainder of the bills before 3:00 p.m., to be able to make flights home.

Skip HB 596 to HB 1064.

The following bills were skipped and not discussed:

11. HB 596, clarifies the types of events that constitute disasters and emergencies for the purposes of emergency management.
12. HB 608, establishes the shipping container inspection program and shipping container inspection program special fund. Amends the definitions of "aerial devices" and "fireworks" within state fireworks law.
13. HB 627, appropriates funds to the Department of Education for positions to implement and maintain school safety measures.
14. HB 745, beginning 1/1/2028, makes the most recent Hawaii state building codes adopted by the state building code Council supersede all existing county building codes and thereafter allows counties to remove requirement of the state building codes....
15. HB 806, appropriates funds for the Honolulu Police Department and Department of Law Enforcement to conduct sting operations on Oahu to enforce fireworks ordinances or laws...

The next bill discussed was:

16. HB 1064. Details responsibilities of State fire marshal out of DLIR. SB 1383 is the companion bill.

There was lengthy discussion on several points in HB 1064.

Recommend sit down to go over each individual section before  
Lots of conflicts and lots of good stuff but some changes are needed before bill is submitted. AG's suggested that can be delegated to staff and establish policy for staff to draft and respond. Bill needs to be rewritten to address issues. Gary to consolidate the issues Chief sees in the bill. Gary may speak with members one on one and be within what the sunshine law allows.

Bills that have not been discussed, First two people who are interested in being involved are now. Once assigned to duo, they will be the only two people who can work on it. Gary can help but can't be the person sending it. But if Gary is authorized as one of the two, he can send it.

C. General position.

These bills were skipped earlier and are now being discussed:

13. HB 627 general support schools

14. HB 745 Hawaii State Building code. Allows counties to amend the Hawaii State Building codes as they apply within its own jurisdiction by:

Independent action until later date SFC addresses issue.

16. HB 806, funds for a sting operation to enforce firework ordinance...

17. HB 1280, requires the State Fire Marshal to convene an electric vehicle fires working group to examine the impact of electric vehicle fires in residential, commercial, and business properties that have confined parking structures.

Discussion: Chief Hao may have someone who can follow-up on this bill.

18. HB 1419, defines stages of wildfire suppression efforts.

Discussion: Chief Jacobs explained that what is wanted is verbiage on controlled and extinguished wildfire suppression. Chair said thermal drones sent up days after a fire. If gas, may be burning underground for months. Define fire suppression..

19. HB 1483, establishes an adjudication system and procedures to process fireworks infractions. Amends multiple definitions....

Generally support less fireworks is better. (Standard opinion)

20. SB 11, requires the Dept. of Land and Natural Resources to create and annually update a wildfire hazard map.

Discussion: None

III. Next Quarterly Meeting

A special meeting for fiscal year 2025 is tentatively scheduled for February 3, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. via virtual meeting.

IV. Adjournment

Hearing no other business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Todd at 3:35 p.m.

  
KAZUO TODD  
Chair