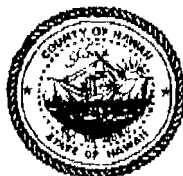


Harry Kim
Mayor



Darryl J. Oliveira
Fire Chief

Desmond K. Wexy
Deputy Fire Chief

County of Hawai'i

FIRE DEPARTMENT

25 Aupuni Street • Suite 103 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

(808) 961-8297 • Fax (808) 961-8296

February 6, 2006

TO : SENATOR DAVID Y. IGE, CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

FROM : DARRYL OLIVEIRA, FIRE CHIEF, COUNTY OF HAWAII

DATE : THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2006, 2:45 P.M.

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF SB 2404, RELATING TO AEROMEDICAL EMERGENCY
PERSONNEL

Thank you for allowing me to provide written testimony in support of SB 2404. I would like to ask for your support of this bill.

The County of Hawaii Fire Department is the primary emergency services provider for the entire island. With this measure, we are requesting to increase our EMS budget in the amount of \$512,931 to provide for dedicated staffing of our Air Medical Helicopter. The justification and background on this issue is directly related to both operational effectiveness and safety.

Based out of the South Kohala Fire Station, the Air Medical Helicopter unit provides island wide emergency response and transport of critically injured or ill patients. The care and treatment of the patients is performed and provided by a crew of one Mobile Intensive Care Technician and one Emergency Medical Technician.

Under our current policies and procedures, these crew members are taken from the South Kohala District ground ambulance unit on an "as needed" or per incident response basis. This practice and procedure results in the removal from service--a critical resource--that serves a well populated and diverse district. The contingency plans for staffing the helicopter in the event that the South Kohala ground ambulance unit is unavailable is to utilize the personnel and staff of the Waikoloa ground ambulance unit or for the pilot to respond solo to the incident scene and utilize the responding ground unit personnel.

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.



SENATOR DAVID Y. IGE, CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
SENATOR ROSALYN H. BAKER, CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

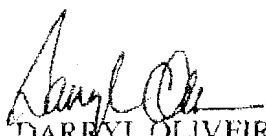
SB 2404

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Both of these procedures have a direct impact on maintaining area service coverage as well as creating situation whereby the safety of the mission and public is compromised. For example, if the pilot responds to the scene alone, he/she may be unable to land at or in close proximity to the scene due to limited visual observation and assessment of the area. The crew members, when present, provide for and aid in maintaining adequate visual assessment of all hazards and obstacles that may be at the scene of an incident. In addition, the response of a fully staffed unit assures that care and transport may be established and initiated immediately upon the arrival of the aircraft.

Given the aforementioned information and issues, we are requesting the necessary funding to provide for the staffing of the Air Medical unit around the clock every day.

I urge your support of SB 2404.



DARRYL OLIVEIRA
Fire Chief

DO:lk