

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 300 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
PHONE: (808) 768-4141 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • INTERNET: www.honolulu.gov



RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR

MICHAEL D. FORMBY
MANAGING DIRECTOR DESIGNATE

DANETTE MARUYAMA
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR

January 25, 2021

The Honorable Sylvia J. Luke, Chair
The Honorable Ty J.K Cullen, Vice Chair
and Members of the Committee on Finance
House of Representatives, Capitol Auditorium
State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Luke, Vice-Chair Cullen, and Members of the Committees on Ways and Means and Finance:

SUBJECT: Informational Briefing with County Mayors

Thank you for the opportunity to provide information regarding matters of importance to the City and County of Honolulu ("County").

In addition to the HCOM package, some of the issues presented to the Legislature last year for consideration remain items of concern. These issues are as follows:

Electric Scooters

The introduction of electric scooters has presented challenging safety and regulatory issues for the County, operators, pedestrians and motor vehicle drivers. The ability to enact reasonable regulations will empower the County to appropriately determine safe operating guidelines for electric scooters.

The proposed bill assists the County by incorporating electric scooters into the traffic code. The bill would address issues including operator age, speed of operation, safety equipment, insurance and registration. Furthermore, it would allow the various counties to tailor the regulations to reflect their unique needs.

Gift Certificates

With the expansion and modernization of public transportation comes the incorporation of new technologies. The County has been actively working on a Holo Card that functions as stored value card for use on transit and transportation systems, with the eventual expansion to other sectors, including retail and services.

The proposed bill would clarify that the term "gift certificates" does not include a card, certificate, or other medium that is, "issued by a county for the purpose of loading and storing value for the purpose of, including but not limited to, paying transit fares and other county fees, or other uses as authorized by the applicable county ordinances."

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Transportation Safety

The County also desires to increase the safe use of public transportation systems. Currently, it is a felony to interfere with the operator of a public transit vehicle. However, with the introduction of driverless vehicles including, but not limited to, the Honolulu rail system and the Maui airport shuttle, the need to protect transit passengers and get them safely to their destination becomes equally paramount.

The proposed bill would add the class C felony of, “intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing the delay, malfunction, or breakdown of an automated operation of a public transit vehicle, system, or service.” A class C felony is punishable by up to five years’ imprisonment and a fine of up to \$10,000.

Extension of Act 87

In 2015, the State Legislature passed SB 1090, relating to the employee’s retirement system. This Act requires the State and counties to furnish payroll and personnel transaction information to the Employees’ Retirement System in the *required format* and requires the State or county to pay to the system in a lump sum at the beginning of the fiscal year the amount equal to the employer contributions payable by the department or agency if a department or agency fails to provide the information in the required format. Furthermore, the Act requires any unpaid amounts to bear interest.

This Act is came into effect this fiscal year. However, County departments are unclear as to “required format.”

The proposed bill would extend the effective date of Act 87 to July 1, 2026, in order to allow the ERS to clarify the required format for department compliance. If the effective date is not pushed back, it could result in fines and interest based costs for all State and county departments.

Emergency Medical Services and Homelessness

The County has actively been in contact with various legislators regarding Emergency Medical Services and homelessness within the City and County of Honolulu. We are embracing the possibility of the new pilot program and look forward to continuing these discussions throughout the legislative session.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify before this Honorable body and we are available to answer questions.