

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

3080

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 24 2006

RE: H.B. No. 2655
H.D. 1
S.D. 1

Honorable Robert Bunda
President of the Senate
Twenty-Third State Legislature
Regular Session of 2006
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committees on Transportation and Government Operations and Intergovernmental Affairs, to which was referred H.B. No. 2655, H.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION,"

beg leave to report as follows:

The purpose of this measure is to require the police department of any county with a population in excess of five hundred thousand to establish a multidisciplinary accident investigation team.

Your Committees received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Transportation; Nightingale Case Management, Inc.; one Hawaii House of Representatives Member, and three individuals. Testimony in opposition was received from the Honolulu Police Department.

Your Committees find that traffic accident investigation is of the utmost urgency, especially when a fatality occurs. Although the evidence collected at traffic accident scenes may be crucial to determining their cause, these accident investigations proceed at a slower rate in Hawaii than in comparable metropolitan areas in the United States. It has been estimated that the average length of time for lane closures in Hawaii ranges from two to four hours for major traffic accidents and to upward of eight hours when a fatality occurs. In contrast, the California highway



patrol average for lane closures ranges from thirty minutes for major collisions to sixty minutes for fatal accidents.

The Honolulu Police Department currently conducts on-site measurements of accidents using surveying equipment to collect data, which is then used to complete accident investigations. In contrast, the California highway patrol, the Oregon state police, the Washington state patrol, the Utah highway patrol, and the Arizona department of public safety use what is known as a multidisciplinary accident investigation team system that employs digital photography and other equipment that has reduced the duration of lane and road closures.

Multidisciplinary accident investigation teams use total station survey systems that employ laser technology to record specific reference points that are recorded in an on-board data collector. Total station survey systems significantly accelerate data collection, thereby minimizing the time the roadway is closed and reducing the exposure of officers and civilian personnel to the inherent hazards of traffic congestion caused by roadway closures. The data can then be downloaded into a computer-aided drawing program and printed in a large format.

The use of total station survey systems have proven to be more efficient than other generally accepted methods, but requires the use of two team members to operate the equipment and document measurements. Data collection can be accelerated even further by use of a robotic total station survey system that can be managed effectively with one member.

Your Committees note the testimony of the Honolulu Police Department that it is presently doing very similar procedures, and that it checked with mainland jurisdictions and learned that they actually have similar traffic investigation times to Honolulu for traffic fatalities. However, mainland cities and counties generally have alternative roads and streets when traffic is tied up so the wait in traffic is largely alleviated. The department also stated that the reported statistics appear to involve investigations of a preliminary nature when compared to traffic fatality investigation in Honolulu. Your Committees are also concerned about the costs of mandating the counties to establish this program.



Your Committees have amended this measure by changing the effective date to July 1, 3006 for the purposes of further discussion.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Transportation and Government Operations and Intergovernmental Affairs that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2655, H.D. 1, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2655, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, and be referred to the Committees on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs and Ways and Means.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committees on Transportation
and Government Operations and
Intergovernmental Affairs,



DAVID Y. IGE, Chair



LORRAINE R. INOUE, Chair



