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**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
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January 26, 2008

**LATE TESTIMONY**

TO: Honorable Joseph M. Souki, Chair  
House Committee on Transportation

FROM: G. Riki Hokama  
Council Chair

DATE: January 28, 2008

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB 2524, RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Riki Hokama".

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is to require the Statewide Transportation Council to comply with county transportation and general plans, to the extent it does not impact Federal funds, in the preparation of the statewide transportation plan for projected transportation needs for a six-year period.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this measure. Therefore, I am providing this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. Requiring the State transportation plan to comply with county transportation and general plans will ensure consistency between the plans. It will also eliminate the potential for conflict with county plans when the State transportation plan is implemented.
2. The measure will ensure that the transportation needs of Maui County residents will be addressed in the State transportation plan.
3. Providing consistency between the State transportation plan and county plans will allow for more effective transportation systems that will better meet the transportation needs of Maui County residents.

For the foregoing reasons, I support this measure.

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January 27, 2008

The Honorable Joseph M. Souki, Chair  
& Members of the House Committee on Transportation  
State House of Representatives, 24<sup>th</sup> State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2008  
State Capitol, Conference Room 309  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96822

**LATE TESTIMONY**

Dear Chair Souki & Members of the House Committee on Transportation:

**SUBJECT: HOUSE BILL NO. 2524; RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**

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I submit this testimony as an individual member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I would like to offer my support for House Bill No. 2524, which would require the Statewide Transportation Council to take into account County General Plans, developments plans, and transportation plans in preparing statewide transportation plans, to the extent it would not impact availability of federal funding.

One of the fundamental tenets of "smart growth" principles is to balance the timing and sequencing of transportation improvements in relation to development. In almost every case at the county level, developments invariably impact both county and state roadway systems.

While consultation currently exists between the counties and the State Department of Transportation on an advisory level, strengthening this coordination to ensure transportation improvements are planned concurrently – rather than retrofitting roadway infrastructure – can only improve the quality of life for the communities we mutually serve.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

RONALD D. KOUCHI  
Kaua'i County Councilmember

COUNTY COUNCIL  
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January 28, 2008

The Honorable Joseph Souki, Chair  
and Members  
House Committee on Transportation  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

LATE TESTIMONY

RE: Senate Bill 2524 Relating to Transportation.

Dear Chair Souki and Members:

I am submitting this written testimony in my individual capacity as a Kaua'i County Councilmember. I presently serve as Planning Committee Chair of the Kaua'i County Council, a position which I have held for the last five years. I have also worked on public policy issues regarding county and state planning for over thirty years.

I write in support of Bill 2524 because it is well-intentioned and underscores a critical need for a new process of cooperative transportation planning between the counties and the state in Hawai'i. It is very clear that the present process is not working and needs significant reform if we, as a state, are to get "in front of" our transportation problems. However, I feel the bill is piecemeal in its approach and should include a more comprehensive set of amendments in order to be maximally effective.

In its essence, the bill gives much more weight to the counties and their planning processes than is given under the current structure. This is appropriate because the counties are closest to both the opportunities and the problems. I agree that the state should not be able to simply override the counties when there is a conflict in plans.

For example, the Koloa-Po'ipu Community recently completed a community-based transportation planning process that resulted in a detailed, multi-modal land transportation plan for the area. The plan was funded by landowners and developers, not the county, and was administered by the community association. This arrangement was worked out when I threatened to introduce a moratorium on building in the Koloa-Po'ipu area. The development community rose to the occasion and a well-organized community decided to spend time and effort on a transportation plan rather than fighting to institute and then defend a moratorium. The community transportation plan was done in 8 months with the expert assistance of Charlier and Associates. It integrates roads, public transit and multi-use paths for biking and walking. It includes a costing of the improvements, suggests a method for allocating of those costs among

## LATE TESTIMONY

developers/land owners and the county, and a timetable for implementation. The county has accepted this plan and is working to implement it. I would hate to see the state plan override an excellent county plan done with extensive community input—especially if the state plan is outdated. The state’s land transportation plan for Kaua`i, which is part of the state transportation plan, was done in 1997 and way overdue for an update.

That being said, many questions arise. How is it to be determined whether a state plan complies with a county’s plans—i.e., how is the bill to be enforced? What if the county’s plans are outdated or poorly done? (The transportation component of the Kaua`i County General Plan is mainly a regurgitation of the State’s highway plan and includes little support for transit, biking or walking. Many of Kaua`i’s community plans are very outdated. The County of Kaua`i has no transportation planner.) Assuming the county’s plan is well done, should not the standard be one of “supporting and complimenting the county’s plan than to simply “comply”? If “smart growth” is the goal, how will there be assurance that both the county and state plans are based on smart growth concepts? How will we ever solve our traffic problems on the neighbor islands when the state transportation plans are primarily highway plans rather than integrated multi-modal plans that coordinate and integrate highways, transit, walking and biking facilities?

In fact, one of the most important policy shifts that the Legislature should look at is changing the Division of Highways in the State Department of Transportation to a Division of Land Transportation. The other DOT divisions include the Airports Division to address air traffic and the Harbors Division to address water transportation, but when it comes to land there is a very definitive bias in favor of highways in the DOT structure with the Highways Division. This explains why there is little or no integration of the other various modes of land transportation in the DOT’s land transportation plans for the neighbor island counties. They’ve been mandated to look at highways for traffic solutions. The “Smart Growth” analysis says that is a mistake. This structural aspect, in my opinion, is one of the main problems with transportation planning in the state when it comes to neighbor island counties.

Finally, the condition in the bill that exempts compliance if the availability of federal funds is affected is a huge loophole that will cause many administrative difficulties. What does this mean? Furthermore, all transportation funding whether from county, state, federal or private sources, should be used in furtherance of a good plan. That is one of the primary functions of a plan—that all funding comes together to implement a plan and not work at cross purposes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I hope this has been helpful.

Sincerely,  
JoAnn A. Yukimura  
Councilmember