
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE LANES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The State of Hawaii's highways are necessary
2 for our people's transportation. Increased time spent on the
3 road in travel decreases time with family or at work, reducing
4 people's quality of life and work effectiveness. As the
5 population grows, especially on the west side of Oahu, the need
6 for travel lanes will only increase.

7 Having high occupancy vehicle lanes or zipper lanes provide
8 an incentive to carpool, effectively reducing the number of cars
9 on the road. However, many incidents cause closure of lanes,
10 whether accidents, car crashes, stalled vehicles, or other
11 issues. This reduction of available travel lanes slows traffic
12 significantly. Studies have shown that for each minute an
13 incident remains in a lane, the backlog of traffic increases by
14 ten minutes. Therefore, allowing the use of the high occupancy
15 vehicle lanes or zipper lanes to any motor vehicle, regardless
16 of the number of passengers when an incident occurs would be the
17 most effective use of lanes for all citizens.

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1 The purpose of this Act is to mitigate traffic and ensure
2 the most effective use of all travel lanes.

3 SECTION 2. Chapter 291C, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended by adding a new section to be appropriately designated
5 and to read as follows:

6 "§291C- High occupancy vehicle lanes; emergencies. (a)
7 Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, any motor vehicle,
8 regardless of the number of persons carried, that can safely
9 enter into a high occupancy vehicle lane or zipper lane, shall
10 be allowed, subject to subsection (b), to use the high occupancy
11 vehicle land or zipper lane when one or more lanes of a laned
12 roadway have been shut down by law enforcement officers or
13 emergency services personnel because of a traffic incident or
14 accident; provided that the use of high occupancy vehicle lane
15 by a motor vehicle without the required number of persons
16 carried shall be limited to a radius of two miles from the
17 incident or accident causing the closure of a lane or lanes.

18 (b) For the purposes of subsection (a), the director of
19 transportation shall have the authority to declare an emergency
20 to open the use of high occupancy vehicle lanes and zipper lanes
21 to all motor vehicles regardless of the number of persons
22 carried.

1 (c) For the purposes of this section:

2 "Accident" means an unplanned event involving a motor
3 vehicle, resulting in damage to one or more motor vehicles,
4 property damage, or personal injury.

5 "Incident" includes, but is not limited to, any accident or
6 issue that disrupts the flow of traffic."

7 SECTION 3. New statutory material is underscored.

8 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2009.

Report Title:

High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes; Zipper Lanes

Description:

Allows all motor vehicles, regardless of number of persons on board, to use high occupancy vehicle lanes or zipper lanes when one or more lanes of traffic have been shut down by law enforcement officers or emergency services personnel. Allows the director of transportation to declare an emergency to open use of HOV and zipper lanes. (SD1)