



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 4, 2009

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

HOUSE BILL NO. 1159

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

House Bill 1159 proposes amendments to the current reckless driving law that will include graduated penalties for first-time offenders and repeat offenders guilty of one or more traffic violations under the State's Traffic Code.

**The Department of Transportation (DOT) supports this bill.**

Reckless drivers who do not follow the rules of the road endanger the safety of all roadway users, including other motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates that one-third of traffic crashes and two-thirds of resulting deaths can be attributed to reckless driving.

According to Hawaii's Judicial Information Management System (JIMS), there were 972 and 963 reckless driving citations statewide in calendar years 2007 and 2008, respectively. During state fiscal year 2007-2008, there were 76 repeat offenders that violated the reckless driving law more than once within the same year.

In addition, the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS) reports that, from calendar years 2005 through 2007 within the State of Hawaii, there were a total of 398 fatal motor vehicle crashes that resulted in 439 fatalities. Of those 398 fatal crashes, 133 or 33.4 percent involved drivers that exhibited characteristics of a reckless driver – such as driving too fast for conditions or in excess of posted speed limit or racing; failure to yield right of way; operating vehicle in erratic, reckless, careless or negligent manner; and failure to obey traffic signs, signals, etc. – that resulted in 144 or 32.8 percent fatalities.

Currently, the reckless driving law does not include graduated penalties for first-time or repeat offenders. The DOT believes that amending the reckless driving statutes to impose graduated penalties would enable the courts to adequately address this dangerous and habitual behavior of drivers that poses unnecessary risk to other roadway users. This bill will serve as a deterrent to those drivers who drive recklessly on the roadways.