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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO FERRIES.

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

1           SECTION 1. The State of Hawaii is made up of a chain of  
2 islands, six of which have major population centers. Unlike  
3 other states, Hawaii does not have the benefit of being linked  
4 to other states through the federal interstate highway system or  
5 a network of intersecting state and local highways and roads.

6           With the exception of slow, time-consuming interisland  
7 shipping and barge operations for the transportation of property  
8 between the islands, the only link between the islands for the  
9 transportation of persons is air transportation, with our  
10 present reliance on two interisland carriers and a few smaller  
11 commuter operations. However, this reliance on air  
12 transportation may be misplaced. With the exception of the  
13 island of Hawaii, each of the neighbor islands is served by only  
14 one airport, and each may be subjected to severe operational  
15 interruption in the event of a natural disaster, such as a  
16 hurricane or earthquake. Even the Hickam Air Force Base-  
17 Honolulu international airport complex, with its location along  
18 the shoreline on Oahu, may be operationally shut down by a



1 natural disaster. For example, had the airport at Lihue, Kauai,  
2 been shut down operationally in the aftermath of Hurricane  
3 Iniki, it would have taken days, if not weeks, before any major  
4 aid and relief in the form of water, food, medical supplies, and  
5 rescue workers could have reached the island. Hawaii is too  
6 reliant on its present slow water carriers and air carriers in  
7 the event of a major natural disaster.

8 While the Hawaii Superferry operation had its shortcomings,  
9 a rocky start, and a questionable financial forecast, it proved  
10 to be a very successful mode of transportation of both persons  
11 and property between the islands of Maui and Oahu. It was the  
12 missing link in the transportation system between the islands  
13 that is so essential for the health, safety, and well-being of  
14 the people of Hawaii.

15 The purpose of this Act is to require the department of  
16 transportation to conduct a study on the feasibility of  
17 establishing a statewide ferry system and ferry system authority  
18 to provide the additional link essential for the carriage of  
19 persons and property between the islands of the State.

20 SECTION 2. (a) The department of transportation shall  
21 conduct a study to determine the feasibility of establishing a  
22 statewide ferry system and a Hawaii state ferry system authority



1 as the primary agency for oversight and regulation of the  
2 statewide ferry system.

3 (b) The department shall study various types of ferry  
4 systems, including passenger-only and passenger, automobile, and  
5 cargo ferry systems, that the department determines are suitable  
6 for operations within Hawaiian waters, taking into account such  
7 parameters as vessel design and speed, passenger capacity, cargo  
8 capacity, automobile capacity, availability of smaller vessels  
9 for transportation between the islands of Maui, Molokai, and  
10 Lanai, and compatibility with harbor infrastructure. The study  
11 shall also include:

- 12 (1) An analysis of potential costs and revenues of a  
13 statewide ferry system, as well as economic, social,  
14 and physical or other effects upon residents of and  
15 visitors to Hawaii;
- 16 (2) Any impact a statewide ferry system would have on the  
17 State and the counties;
- 18 (3) Information on the financing of a statewide ferry  
19 system, including the establishment of rates, fees,  
20 rents, charges, or any other payments or costs  
21 associated with a statewide ferry system;



1 (4) Information on the development of a special fund for  
2 the financial self-sustainability of the statewide  
3 ferry system; and

4 (5) Information on the impact that a statewide ferry  
5 system would have on the other water carriers in the  
6 State.

7 (c) The study shall also include the following information  
8 on the development of a Hawaii state ferry system authority:

9 (1) The composition of the authority;

10 (2) The rights, duties, powers, and obligations of the  
11 authority in developing, coordinating, and  
12 implementing state policies and direction for the safe  
13 transportation of persons and property by ferry  
14 between the Hawaiian islands; and

15 (3) The ability of the authority to eliminate or reduce  
16 barriers to travel by ferry between the Hawaiian  
17 islands and provide a positive and competitive  
18 business environment.

19 (d) The department shall submit a report of its findings  
20 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the  
21 legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of  
22 the regular session of 2011.



1 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



**Report Title:**

Transportation; Ferry System Study

**Description:**

Requires the Department of Transportation to conduct a study on the feasibility of establishing a statewide ferry system and the Hawaii State Ferry System Authority for the operation of a ferry system between the islands. Effective 7/1/2050.

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

