



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

March 8, 2010

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SENATE BILL NO. 2358, SD 1

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

The Department of Transportation opposes this bill. The mission of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes directly contradict the impacts of the proposal in this bill. High occupancy vehicle lanes are intended to increase occupancy numbers in each vehicle and decrease the number of vehicles on our roads. While we support energy conservation efforts, it is not appropriate to have contradicting programs for HOV facilities.

Federal legislation under Section 1121 of SAFETEA-LU allows states the option of permitting energy-efficient vehicles to use HOV lanes without the required occupancy. However, this was not allowed in prior federal authorization under TEA-21. SAFETEA-LU has expired and has been temporarily extended. It is not clear if the new federal authorization will also allow energy-efficient vehicles to use HOV lanes without occupancy requirements, as some states that have allowed these vehicles to use the lanes have experienced heavy, congested conditions in HOV lanes as the number of these vehicles increase.

Please note that SAFETEA-LU federal regulations require our freeway HOV lanes that allow energy-efficient vehicles, to operate at an average operating speed of 45 miles per hour. States with HOV lanes that do not meet these federal performance requirements must implement measures to meet these requirements, including equal enforcement of occupancy requirements for all vehicles in the HOV lanes.

Our position is similar to the state of Washington, where hybrid and alternate fuel vehicles are allowed in HOV lanes only with the required number of riders. The state of California had implemented a similar program, and is now proceeding to rescind it because the number of these vehicles have increased sufficiently to congest their HOV facilities.

Testimony before the House Committee on
Transportation

SB 2358 SD1, Relating to Transportation Energy Initiatives

Monday, March 8, 2010
9:30 a.m., Conference Room 309

By Carlos Perez Loriga
Director
Customer Technology Applications Division
Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.

Chair Souki, Vice Chair Awana and members of the Committee:

My name is Carlos Perez Loriga and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc., and its subsidiary utilities, Maui Electric Company, Ltd., and Hawaii Electric Light Company, Inc.

SB 2358 SD1 allows electric vehicles capable of driving at least fifty-five miles per hour to utilize high occupancy vehicle lanes regardless of the number of passengers in the vehicle.

Hawaiian Electric Company strongly supports SB 2358 SD1 to promote the increased use of electric automobiles. Increased consumer acceptance of these types of vehicles will aid in the reduction of greenhouse emissions and fossil fuel use and will help enable the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative's goal of 70% clean, renewable energy by 2030.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.