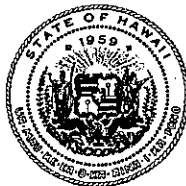


SB 2358

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 16, 2010

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SENATE BILL NO. 2358

COMMITTEES ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
AND
TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

While the Department of Transportation supports energy conservation efforts, we cannot support this bill. The mission of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) and high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes 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.

FHWA also requires states to preserve and maintain the integrity of HOV facilities. So while states do have some discretion for exemptions to occupancy requirements, should the HOV facility become congested or the benefits of ridesharing in HOV facilities is diminished, the DOT must have the flexibility and discretion to adjust rules and requirements for utilizing an HOV facility.

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 are now proceeding to rescind it because the number of these vehicles have increased sufficiently to congest their HOV facilities.

Written Statement of
YUKA NAGASHIMA
Executive Director & CEO
High Technology Development Corporation
before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
AND TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL
AFFAIRS**
Tuesday, February 16, 2010
2:45 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225

In consideration of
SB 2358 RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION ENERGY INITIATIVES.

Chairs Gabbard and English, and Members of the Senate Committees on Energy and Environment and Transportation, International and Intergovernmental Affairs.

The High Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) supports SB2358 because it encourages activities that contribute to the goals of the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support.



Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

February 16, 2010, 2:45 P.M.
(Testimony is 1 page long)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 2358, WITH A PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Aloha Chair Gabbard, Chair English, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Chapter of the Sierra Club *supports* 2358, which provides that commuter lanes may be used by hybrids.

Hawai'i is the most dependent state in the nation on imported oil. Some 50 million barrels are imported annually, nearly 80% of which originate from foreign sources. In addition, over 805,000 tons of coal are imported into our state. These sources provide power for over 92% of Hawaii's electricity generation. The combustion of these resources also contributes over 23 million tons of climate changing greenhouse gas into our atmosphere annually.

Hawaii's economic, environmental, and energy security demand that we reduce the amount of fossil fuel imported and consumed in Hawaii. This bill is a solid step in that direction. *With little or no cost to the State*, this measure creates a subtle enticement that is sure to register when people go to purchase an automobile. It has been our experience that people who've purchase hybrids in California -- a state that has adopted a similar act -- have referenced this as one of the reasons they chose a hybrid. Seemingly a silly reason to purchase a fuel efficient vehicle but an effective incentive that people remember.

Recognizing the concern that too many cars to enter the commuter lane, we suggest raising the threshold definition of hybrid cars to vehicles that get 50 mpg or higher (only one commercial vehicle currently has this high of a level) and successively raising this standard each year. Or -- if the Department of Transportation adopts rules -- limiting the number of vehicles eligible for this program to the first 15,000 vehicles that apply.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.