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Testimony in Support of HB 2626 HD2 RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL
Senate EDU/TIA, WAM 1:15pm Auditorium 3/16/12
Submitted by Chad Taniguchi, Executive Director, Hawaii Bicycling League

Protect all vulnerable road users!

The Hawaii Bicycling League asks all road users to heed Kamehameha's Law of the Splintered Paddle because "Everyone has the right to be safe on Hawaii's roads."

Mutual safety and concern for others is of utmost importance on the public roads for motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists, and other users of our public road system. This is a shared space that we must use carefully. King Kamehameha decreed in 1797 that "everyone has the right to be safe on Hawaii's roads – including old and young, women and children." Mamalahoe Kanawai (Law of the Splintered Paddle).

We support HB2626 HD2 to make a Safe Routes to School Program a permanent part of the Department of Transportation. The Hawaii Bicycling League supports all efforts to help more children walk and bike to school, to save on gas, to encourage students' independence and fitness, to help the environment, and to reach a sustainable means of living on planet earth.

HB 2626 is a good start to encouraging all schools to work as a team of parents, teachers, administrators together with DOT, the county transportation agencies and community organizations to identify and create safe routes to each school in Hawaii.

Will the funding source proposed in this bill be sufficient to do the job? The DOT administrators must recognize that a law without implementation is meaningless. For example, a similar position – State Bicycle Coordinator – has been vacant for two full years now. Focus for the qualifications of a Safe Routes to School Coordinator should not be an engineer, but should include planners and others with training who will work with parents and teachers to advocate for and push the DOT engineers and road administrators to do justice to children's need to walk and bicycle safely to school. Build roads for children to walk and bike safely to school!

We can help our children be safe and healthy if we have the will to do it.

Ride Aloha! Drive Aloha!

Everyone has the right to be safe on Hawaii's roads.

Mamalahoe Kanawai, Kamehameha's Law of the Splintered Paddle 1797, Hawaii state constitution 1978

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