

TO: Members of the Committee on Transportation

FROM: Natalie Iwasa, aka Bike Mom  
Honolulu, HI 96825  
808-395-3233



HEARING: 10 a.m. Monday, February 11, 2013

SUBJECT: HB 1080 Bikeway Projects - **SUPPORT**

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony on HB 1080, which requires the identification, funding and establishment of alternative bikeway projects in certain instances. I support this measure and the strengthening of our current law with respect to bike facilities.

While I wholeheartedly support this measure, I would like to raise awareness that it remains a struggle to not only get improvements for bicyclists but even to just keep the status quo. The state DOT installed a new turning lane in Hawaii Kai last year, despite concerns that I brought up related to bicyclists and pedestrians. We now have a situation that puts bicyclists in a precarious position – having to pass through a busy lane of traffic on Kalanianaʻole Hwy. to get to the bike lane. Attached is additional information about that particular situation.

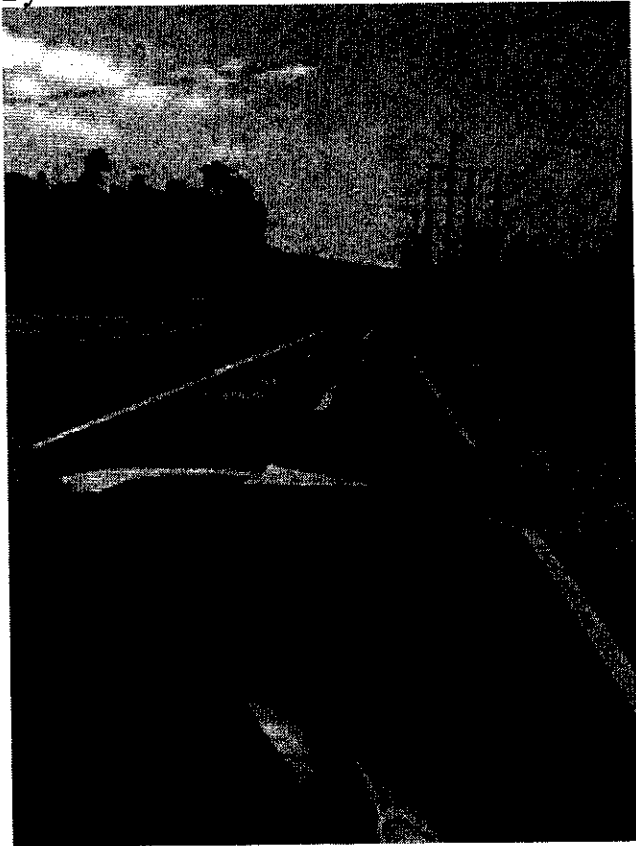
Please vote “yes” and pass this bill, and please help hold the DOT accountable to the laws you pass.

# New 'right turn only' lane in Hawaii Kai a danger to bicyclists

POSTED: 01:30 a.m. HST, Jan 29, 2013

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By Natalie Iwasa



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The state and county have done a good job of talking about improving the environment for bicyclists by passing the Complete Streets law, approving the Oahu Bike Plan, setting up a Safe Routes to School fund and mandating reduced oil consumption — but sometimes engineering practices just don't match the talk.

A case in point is the new right-turn lane from Keahole Street onto Kalaniana'ole Highway in Hawaii Kai.



*Natalie Iwasa is president of Cycle On Hawaii.*

The state Department of Transportation (DOT) completed the project last year with the intention that motorists would spend less time waiting to turn onto the highway. Not only have some motorists expressed their dissatisfaction that they have not experienced the expected improvements, but one group of roadway users in particular is actually worse off now than they were before the new lane was put in.

This intersection includes a right-turn-only lane (RTOL) just prior to the new lane. When a bicyclist encounters a RTOL and wishes to go straight, the proper movement is to get into the "through

lane" and then back into the bike lane.

At the intersection of Kalaniana'ole Highway and Keahole Street, this movement is made more difficult with the addition of the new turning lane, as the bicyclist ends up in the middle lane and must cross the new lane to get back into the bike lane. In my experience, this is an awkward movement at best and is further complicated when motorists do not follow the rules of the road.

I have asked the state DOT to allow bicyclists to go through the RTOL, as is permissible under federal guidelines, by putting up applicable signage and paint in the RTOL. The response from the state was that such an exception would "create confusion" between motorists and bicyclists.

Maui, however, has several intersections that include combined bike and right-turn-only lanes. Does the state consider Maui drivers somehow more competent than Oahu drivers? Or is it just more acceptable to put bicyclists on Oahu in this precarious situation?

Of all of the RTOLs on Kalaniana'ole Highway between Ainakoa Avenue and Lunalilo Home Road — there are at least 10 of them — only one is marked with a bike lane. Imagine if bicyclists followed the law and rode down the highway alternating between the bike lane and the through lane as each RTOL were encountered. Given our limited space, it simply makes sense for our planners to accommodate bicyclists in the manner that is already being done on Maui.

I urge the DOT to follow through with the "talk" of supporting Complete Streets and creating a better environment for bicyclists sooner rather than later and include an exception for bicyclists in every RTOL on Kalaniana'ole Highway.



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Thursday, January 24th, 2013 | Posted by [Guest Contributor](#) | [Print This Article](#)

## Hawaii Kai's New Traffic Lane Confusing Commuters



Example of one of several signs allowed to indicate bicyclists may travel straight through a

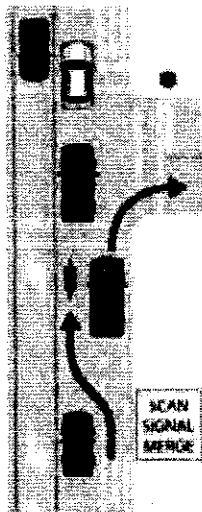
**BY NATALIE IWASA** - The state Department of Transportation (DOT) completed a project in Hawaii Kai last year to add a dedicated right-turn lane from Keahole Street onto Kalaniana'ole Highway. Some have misunderstood that this would be a free-turning right lane, i.e., no stop would be required. Others are upset that the lane hasn't resulted in the expected ease of traffic flow. While it might be argued that we spent about \$4 million<sup>1</sup> for improvements that have not materialized for motorists, the situation for two groups is now actually worse because of the change, and the state has said "no" to suggested improvements.

Bicyclists are not allowed to go straight through right-turn-only lanes (RTOL) unless specific markings or signage is in place. At the intersection of Kalaniana'ole Hwy. and Keahole that means bicyclists should be in the through travel lane if they do not want to turn onto Keahole Street. When they finish crossing the intersection, they end up in the middle lane and must cross the new lane to get into the bike lane. Based on my experience, this is an awkward transition at best and quite dangerous in many instances.

Several times while going through this intersection the "proper" way, motorists behind passed me illegally on the right. Other times drivers who were waiting on Keahole Street to turn onto Kalaniana'ole Hwy. did not turn until I'd completely made it through the intersection, even though their lane was open.

A few times drivers turned and then drove slowly, presumably so that I could merge into their lane in front of them and then get into the bike lane. It is very difficult for bicyclists to see drivers from this angle (over the right shoulder looking back), however, and they should usually not attempt to pull in front of motorists in this situation. Most recently, a motorist passed me by going straight through the right-turn-only lane.

In addition, it is my understanding that bicyclists traveling in this manner break the mandatory bike lane law (HRS 291C-145). The alternative is for bicyclists to go straight through the RTOL. Prior to the addition of the new lane, most bicyclists did this with little to no impact on motorists (although they did break the law doing so).



bicyclists when they encounter right-turn-only lanes that do not have exceptions for bicyclists. Add lanes on each side of the white car to get an idea of the intersection of Kalanianaʻole Hwy. and Keahole.

While no solution is going to be ideal, the situation can be significantly improved by allowing bicyclists to travel straight through the RTOL. The cost to make this change is minimal – all that's required is a couple of signs and some paint. The DOT has stated they do not want to allow this exception because they don't want to "create confusion" between motorists and bicyclists, and they want to maintain the integrity of the right turn from Keahole. As noted above, however, traffic isn't moving the way it was intended anyway.

The state and county have done a good job of talking about improving the environment for bicyclists by passing the Complete Streets law, approving the Oahu Bike Plan and mandating reduced oil consumption, but when it comes to actual improvements, they are few and far between. In this case, the state is apparently willing to take on the added risk that someone will get hurt. (As added background, it should be noted that I brought up my concerns regarding this turn lane many times over the past six years.)

The other group that is at increased risk of being hit is pedestrians. Rather than improve the situation for pedestrians by adding a pork chop island to Keahole Street, the state did nothing. As motorists get used to going through the intersection and realize that most of the time, with the exception of bicyclists or bus drivers who are disobeying the law, traffic will not be coming from the left into their new lane, and they will stop looking to their left.

I urge the DOT to follow through with the "talk" of supporting Complete Streets and energy sustainability sooner rather than later by improving the environment for bicyclists. Every RTOL on Kalanianaʻole Hwy. should include an exception for bicyclists.

The cost of the Keahole right-turn lane has been reported several times over the past few years as just under \$2 million. When the issue was pursued at a meeting of the Hawaii Kai Neighborhood Board, a state representative reported November 30, 2010, that the cost included the following: \$1.9 million contractor cost, right-of-way \$88,000, electrical rerouting \$811,000, construction engineering \$391,000, and DOT administrative and inspection costs ~\$400,000. That does not include the fee for the environmental assessment or change orders made after that date.

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**Public Health.** One third of us are overweight or obese. This sad fact reflects, among other life style factors, the long-term consequences transportation decisions made in the past. We have not provided facilities for people to walk and ride bikes safely in our communities, where trips of 1/4 to 1/2 mile are entirely feasible on foot, and 3 mile or more on bicycles, if it were only perceived to be safe.

Please support the use of bikeway funding -- which is already required by law -- to ensure we move forward with reasonable and smart projects.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



# Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter

PO Box 2577, Honolulu, HI 96803  
808.538.6616 hawaii.chapter@sierraclub.org

**LATE**

## HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

February 11, 2013, 10:00 A.M.  
(Testimony is 2 pages long)

### TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1080

Aloha Chair Yamane and Members of the Committee:

The Sierra Club, Hawaii Chapter, with over 10,000 dues paying members and supporters statewide, *supports* HB 1080. This bill would require the establishment of alternate bikeway projects when the original project may be unfeasible.

Bikeway funding is an investment in the health of both Hawaii's residents and environment. Consider:

**Safety.** Honolulu unfortunately ranks high nationwide in pedestrian deaths. While there has been a decline in bicycle/pedestrian accidents nationwide, Hawai'i has witnessed an increase in our death rate from bicycle/pedestrian accidents. At 5.7 deaths per million of our population, our rate is over twice the national average. Worse, of our total traffic deaths, over 25% are cyclists and pedestrians, again about twice the national rate. Roughly 80% of car/bicycle accidents are the fault of the automobile operator.

**Traffic Congestion.** Some facts from Boulder Colorado, where a Transportation Management Plan that included enhanced bike/pedestrian facilities was implemented about 20 years ago. Both pedestrian trips and bike trips increased by over 10%, while car use diminished by 14% (growth in bus use accounts for the rest). Consider the potential in Honolulu, where our weather is conducive to outdoor activities year round. Many residents have indicated a desire to use bicycles for some part of their trip needs, if only there were safe facilities to do so. Despite lacking such facilities here in Honolulu, 5.7% of us walk or bike to work, 1.6 times the national average. Consider the untapped potential to economically reduce automobile use while still meeting transportation demand, if only safe facilities were available.

**ichiyama1 - Tate**

**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 10, 2013 2:52 PM  
**To:** TRNtestimony  
**Cc:** Octibel@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1080 on Feb 11, 2013 10:00AM



**HB1080**

Submitted on: 2/10/2013

Testimony for TRN on Feb 11, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 309

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Kim M	Individual	Support	No

Comments: As an avid cyclist and bike to work commuter, the present state of Honolulu's infrastructure for bike-friendly routes and definite lack of bicyclist awareness makes each ride more than just challenging. Having legislature support a more proactive development of cycling would greatly enhance the safety and encourage more persons to look at the bike as a comfortable alternative to cars. Through support of HB 1080, I would hope to see Honolulu change into a more bike-friendly/bike-conscious community.

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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**ichiyama1 - Tate**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 10, 2013 11:27 PM  
**To:** TRNtestimony  
**Cc:** chad@hbl.org  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1080 on Feb 11, 2013 10:00AM

**HB1080**

Submitted on: 2/10/2013  
Testimony for TRN on Feb 11, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 309



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Chad Taniguchi	Hawaii Bicycling League	Support	No

Comments: The Hawaii Bicycling League (HBL) supports this bill. HBL pushed for the existing language several years ago and expected that DOT would do as the law required. However, DOT has not done enough to support bicycling infrastructure and the additional language is needed for DOT compliance. To be fair to DOT there were years when it planned to have the Leeward Bike Path listed to use the 2% funding requirement, but additional requirements by DLNR delayed the Leeward Bike Path project, and DOT listed the Kahana bridge as a bike project. When HBL called DOT on it, DOT admitted that the bridge was not a bike project. DOT should have worked with HBL and others to look for alternative bikeway projects then. It would help if DOT would hire a state bike and pedestrian coordinator as it is required to do. This position has been vacant for 3+ years!!! Meanwhile DOT staff do not give bikeway projects enough priority. As the world economy moves to less dependence on fossil fuels by necessity, changes must happen on the ground to support the thousands of people who want to bicycle but feel it is unsafe to do so. Putting resources now, before it is too late, into bicycling infrastructure is the key to a healthier, safer community, with more money to spend on important things like housing and education, rather than burning oil money every day on our congested streets. DOT, change your thinking and acting now! I am sorry I am unable to attend today's hearing because of my father's 93rd birthday event on Kauai. Sincerely yours, Chad Taniguchi Executive Director, Hawaii Bicycling League

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

February 11, 2013, 10:00 A.M.

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 1080

Aloha Chair Yamane and Members of the Committee,

**LATE**

There are few places in the world whose climate is more suited to cycling than Hawaii, and yet our bike paths and bike lanes are woefully inadequate. Have you ever tried to cycling to work in Honolulu? It is stressful. There is no room on our streets for cyclists

We have the potential to reduce automobile usage, save gas, cut CO2 emissions, improve the health of those who start to cycle and reduce the incidence of cyclist and pedestrian deaths.

Please pass this bill

Mahalo  
anthony aalto

**ichiyama1 - Tate**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Monday, February 11, 2013 1:39 AM  
**To:** TRNtestimony  
**Cc:** janicem@lava.net  
**Subject:** Submitted testimony for HB1080 on Feb 11, 2013 10:00AM

**HB1080**

Submitted on: 2/11/2013  
Testimony for TRN on Feb 11, 2013 10:00AM in Conference Room 309



<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Janice Marsters	Individual	Support	No

Comments: Dear Chair Yamane and Committee Members, I am an avid cyclist and formerly commuted by bicycle from my home in Manoa to my office in Pearl City a few days a week. A few near-misses and one (fortunately minor) crash led me to stop commuting. It's sad that, with Hawaii's near-perfect cycling weather, our streets are not safer for all users. Many people tell me they would like to commute by bicycle but are afraid to do so. Our streets should be safe for our keiki to bike to school, and adults to bike to work. That will happen only with strong public policy promoting good infrastructure. Please pass this bill. Thank you, Janice Marsters

Please note that testimony submitted less than 24 hours prior to the hearing, improperly identified, or directed to the incorrect office, may not be posted online or distributed to the committee prior to the convening of the public hearing.

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**From:** atchesond@gmail.com on behalf of David Atcheson [david@atcheson.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 12, 2013 9:00 AM  
**To:** TRNtestimony  
**Subject:** HB 1080 - in support

**LATE TESTIMONY**

Dear members of the House Committee on Transportation:

I testified yesterday in support of HB 1080 relating to bicycles. At Vice Chair Ichiyama's request, I am sending a written version of that testimony.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. My name is David Atcheson, and I live here in Downtown/Chinatown and am a bicyclist for both transportation and recreation. I am here to lend my support to HB 1080.

Investments in bicycling infrastructure are some of the most cost-effective transportation investments we can make. Bicycling is an excellent transportation alternative in many ways:

- cycling is one of the most efficient means of transportation available, by some estimates equating to 732 miles per gallon (see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Energy\\_efficiency\\_in\\_transportation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Energy_efficiency_in_transportation))
- cycling is non-polluting
- it contributes to a healthy lifestyle
- it saves money (gas and health care)
- it is a carbon and oil free form of transportation (not counting energy expended in construction of the infrastructure)

Looking ahead to increasingly scarce and expensive oil, I don't think there is any way we will look back on investments made today in bicycle infrastructure and regret those investments. Instead, the value of those investments will only become increasingly apparent.

I urge the committee to approve HB 1080 and ensure that at least a small slice of the funds for any given road construction or expansion project be allocated to bikeways, whether the bikeway can be co-located with the road project or needs to be built at an alternative location.

Thank you for your consideration.

The following is an addendum to testimony I gave yesterday:

In my reading, the most important part of the bill says that if you can't use the "at least two percent of eligible federal funds, and in addition, other state highway funds as available" for a bikeway co-located with a given roadway project, then you use the equivalent funds on "an alternative bikeway project or projects." I am concerned that this part appears not to have been included in the "reporting only" version.

There was discussion of the existing processes underway via the Bicycle Master Plans with the implication that additional consulting would be redundant. It occurs to me that one way to address this would be to take the bikeway monies in cases where co-located bikeways are deemed impractical and put them in a fund used to accelerate work on projects identified and prioritized in the Master Bicycle Plans.

Sincerely,

David Atcheson  
1212 Nuuanu Ave Apt. 906  
Honolulu, HI 96817