

SB 459

RELATING TO HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY.

Requires, when a highway has four lanes moving in the same direction, the operator of a commercial motor vehicle to drive in the right most lane. Provides certain exceptions.



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

January 28, 2013

**SB 459
RELATING TO HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY**

Senate Committee on Transportation and International Affairs

The Department of Transportation **opposes SB 459** because it is not necessary. 291C-49(3) H.R.S. already provides the authority necessary to restrict lane use through official signing. In addition, the Department of Transportation has the following concerns on a blanket lane use restriction:

1. Although this kind of restriction has been utilized on various modern interstates in a few jurisdictions, implementing this restriction on Oahu's interstates is not appropriate. The most congested sections of the H-1 Freeway were built prior to today's modernized design and access restrictions for interchange proximities. Closely spaced on- and off-ramps reduces the creation of gaps necessary for vehicles to merge and weave comfortably. SB 459 will create more challenging driving conditions by congesting the right lanes with larger, slower moving vehicles making lane transitions more difficult and shortening sight distances to already short urban on-ramps. The end result may actually be a slower traffic flow rather than what is intended to help improve traffic flow; and
2. SB 459 will also result in large vehicles making last-minute changes when left turns or exits are necessary. These larger, slower vehicles are not as maneuverable as passenger vehicles and all motorists will be exposed to increased conflicts in these last-minute lane changes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



POLICE DEPARTMENT
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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OUR REFERENCE KK-LC

January 28, 2013

The Honorable J. Kalani English, Chair
and Members
Committee on Transportation
and International Affairs
State Senate
Hawaii State Capitol
514 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair English and Members:

Subject: Senate Bill No. 459, Relating to Highway Traffic Safety

I am Kurt Kendro, Major of the Traffic Division of the Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD supports the passage of Senate Bill No. 459, Relating to Highway Traffic Safety. Passage of this bill would require that commercial motor vehicles would have to use the right hand lane in those roadways with four or more clearly marked lanes. By keeping the slower moving vehicles in the right lane it will facilitate a better flow of traffic on the main thoroughfares throughout the state.


The HPD would recommend a change to the bill. On page 1, line 5, that the language should be changed to "two or more clearly marked lanes" so this would apply to all of the H-1, H-2, H-3, H-201, Pali and Likelike Highways. This would facilitate the flow of traffic on all of the main thoroughfares on the island of Oahu.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

APPROVED:


LOUIS M. KEALOHA
Chief of Police

Sincerely,


KURT KENDRO, Major
Traffic Division



January 28, 2013

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
ON SB 459 RELATING TO HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY**

Thank you Chair English and committee members. I am Gareth Sakakida, Managing Director of the Hawaii Transportation Association (HTA) with over 400 transportation related members throughout the state of Hawaii.

First, I am not sure what problem the bill is intended to address.

If the perceived problem is commercial motor vehicles (CMV) are unable to keep up with the speed of traffic, that is not true. CMV engine sizes are designed to maintain highway speeds while pulling their designed loads.

This would not be so while fully loaded traversing certain inclines. In these cases the CMV would travel in the right lane with emergency lights flashing, which is illegal, but desired and tolerated by the police department.

Slow will definitely occur if CMVs are limited to the right hand lane on a freeway as that is where there is the most traffic flow conflict with vehicles entering and exiting. CMVs will have to proceed even more slowly in those areas in order to maintain safe following distances. That slowed pace coupled with vehicle length will slow down progress for all in those areas.

CMVs also include small vehicles like minibuses, vans, pick ups and sedans which have no problem keeping up with traffic even on inclines.

While the bill permits the use of the left lane in the case of turns and exiting the freeway, it does not address how far away from those turns or exits the CMV can enter the left lane. In our training we have drivers place themselves in the needed lane as early as possible to avoid lane changes and traffic conflicts.

Needing to jump across four lanes is just not a reasonably safe maneuver when required to be executed in a limited space. The title of this bill is Highway Traffic Safety, but jumping across the freeway or highway is not conducive to being safe.

Furthermore, CMVs are required to pay more taxes and fees than other vehicles and should not be offered less capacity on the roads and highways, unless a reduction in those taxes and fees become part of this proposal.

Thank you.

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

S.B. No. 459

Relating to Highway Traffic Safety

Monday, January 28, 2013
1:15 pm
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

Rick Ravelo

**Director, Corporate Safety Division
Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.**

Chair English, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rick Ravelo and I represent Hawaiian Electric Company and its subsidiary utilities Maui Electric Company and Hawaii Electric Light Company. We recommend **approval** of this bill with amendments.

Senate Bill 459 establishes a requirement that when a highway has four lanes moving in the same direction, the operator of a commercial motor vehicle must drive in the traffic lane that is as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable. Most on and off the highway merging occurs within the right most lane for these types of highways. Vehicles merging onto the highway tend to try and get in front of the larger commercial motor vehicle, creating additional road hazards and a higher potential for accidents involving commercial motor vehicles. Commercial motor vehicles require larger distances between vehicles to allow for their slower reaction time due to the size and weight of their vehicles.

We therefore suggest an amendment to Page 1, Line 7, paragraph (a) to read: "Upon any roadway having four or more clearly marked lanes of traffic in one direction, the operator of a commercial motor vehicle shall use the first two lanes of traffic lane that is as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable." And, amendment to Page 1, Line 12, Paragraph (b) to read: "When overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction, the operator of a

commercial motor vehicle shall use the lane to the immediate left of the vehicle they are passing and overtaking. ~~of the right hand lane.~~”

These amendments will help maintain the safety of commercial motor vehicles drivers as well as other drivers on our highways while assisting the committee to help relieve traffic on Oahu.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.