



## DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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February 9, 2018

### TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

#### House Bill 2232 – Relating to Motor Vehicle Weight Tax

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 2232 – Relating to Motor Vehicle Weight Tax. The purpose of this bill is to amend Chapter 249, Hawaii Revised Statutes, by amending the definition of “net weight” to exempt weight attributable to modifications to make a vehicle accessible to a person with a physical disability. This would apply only to vehicles that are purchased or retrofitted for personal, non-commercial use, and result in a lower motor vehicle weight tax and lower total cost of making a vehicle accessible and more affordable to use over the life of the vehicle.

The State imposes an annual motor vehicle weight tax and authorizes the counties to impose their own and to set their own rates. Depending on which county you reside in, the rate ranges between 1.25 and 5.5 cents per pound for non-commercial vehicles and trucks weighing less than 6,500 pounds.

The rationale behind a motor vehicle weight tax is that the heavier the vehicle, the greater impact on roads, and therefore owners of heavier vehicles should pay more. However, for every trip a disabled person makes using his or her own vehicle instead of a county subsidized paratransit service, the person saves taxpayers a substantial amount. In addition, in the interest of self-empowerment, disincentives to obtaining lift equipped vehicles should be removed. With the proposed weight exemption, owners of vehicles with accessibility modifications would still pay motor vehicle weight fees based on their vehicle’s weight minus the modification. Therefore, the actual revenue impact to the state and/or counties would be minimal, while encouraging persons with disabilities to be independently mobile.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

FRANCINE WAI  
Executive Director

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



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**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
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February 9, 2018  
10:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Room 423

**H.B. 2232**  
**RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLE WEIGHT TAX**

House Committee on Transportation

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) offers **comments** on this bill.

The DOT recognizes that the bill proposes an exemption that will help persons with disabilities. The DOT is also obligated to point out that the proposed exemption would have a negative impact on the health of the State Highway Fund. The proposed exemption for the vehicle weight tax would reduce the revenues deposited into the State Highway Fund, which is a major source of revenue deposited into the State Highway Fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**Testimony by:**

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IN REPLY REFER TO: