
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HIGHWAYS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Farrington highway
2 is the sole major roadway on Oahu's leeward coast and it is also
3 the sole access route that links the Waianae district to Ewa and
4 points east, including metropolitan Honolulu. Although west
5 Oahu has experienced exponential growth and development over the
6 last twenty years, transportation infrastructure has not kept
7 pace. Traffic volume on Farrington highway has increased from
8 an average of twenty thousand vehicles per day in 2000, to fifty
9 thousand vehicles per day in 2016. Although planned rail and
10 other public transportation expansions, such as more robust bus
11 service, may alleviate some traffic congestion once fully
12 implemented, a solution that depends solely on public
13 transportation is too far in the future and inadequate. Traffic
14 conditions continue to worsen and frustrated Leeward motorists
15 are caught in gridlock traffic conditions on a daily basis. The
16 community applauds efforts to address this pressing problem by
17 implementing a contraflow lane, constructing a turn lane,



1 installing infrared sensors and traffic cameras; however,
2 Farrington highway continues to experience lane closures or
3 complete shutdowns on numerous occasions due to road work,
4 traffic accidents, severe weather, and other emergency
5 conditions.

6 The legislature further finds that in a coordinated effort
7 between numerous departments and agencies, plans have been put
8 in place to use existing roads as an emergency access and bypass
9 route into the Waianae area during emergency highway closures or
10 other emergency situations. The system of roads, known as the
11 Waianae Coast Emergency Access Road System (WCEAR), consists of
12 gated roads that are under the jurisdiction of the department of
13 emergency management of the city and county of Honolulu that can
14 be opened when it is deemed necessary or when requested by the
15 Honolulu police department. While use of WCEAR has provided
16 needed relief during recent emergency situations, improvements
17 are still needed. The residents of the Waianae district bear
18 the largest burden of the current infrastructural insufficiency
19 since they must contend with daily commutes of up to two hours
20 each way for jobs or school. Additionally, the lack of any
21 alternate route leaves leeward residents more vulnerable to harm



1 in an emergency situation. There is currently no available
2 route that can be used as an alternative to Farrington highway
3 during times when Farrington highway is impassable. Coastal
4 residents are at the mercy of traffic conditions for travel
5 within and out of the Waianae district and may be unable to
6 reach emergency services or to timely evacuate the area if the
7 sole available route both through and out of the district is
8 impassable due to storm damage, severe vehicular accidents, or
9 even daily rush hour traffic.

10 The legislature additionally finds that any project to
11 alleviate traffic congestion on Oahu's west side must first
12 avoid exacerbating the problem through ongoing lane closures or
13 other disruptions caused by road construction. It is critical
14 that any project to supply alternate transportation corridors
15 must minimize or, ideally, altogether avoid creating additional
16 transportation barriers for residents of west Oahu and must be
17 completed in a timely manner.

18 Therefore, to extradite improvements, the purpose of this
19 Act is to exempt changes and improvements to existing portions
20 of the WCEAR from environmental assessment requirements under
21 chapter 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes.



H.B. NO. 907

Report Title:

Waianae Coast Emergency Access Road; Environmental Assessment;
Exemption

Description:

Exempts changes and improvements to existing portions of the Waianae coast emergency access road within the Waianae district of Oahu from environmental assessment requirements under chapter 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

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