



TESTIMONY BY:

JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors
LYNN A.S. ARAKI-REGAN
DEREK J. CHOW
ROSS M. HIGASHI
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN

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

February 11, 2021
3:00 P.M.
State Capitol, Teleconference

S.B. 1011
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR HIGHWAY WIDENING

Senate Committee on Transportation

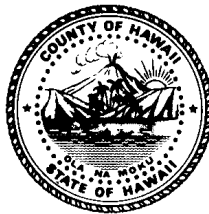
The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** S.B. 1011 and offers comments. S.B. 1011 requests that DOT evaluate Kuakini Highway and Queen Kaahumanu Highway between Henry Street and Kamehameha III Road and a \$30 million appropriation is provided from the general fund.

The DOT supports efforts to improve the operations and capacity of its roadways. However, the needs of the State Highway System exceed our available resources. Because of this, the DOT has identified safety and preservation projects as being the highest priority for funding. Capacity is identified as a need and potential improvements are identified in the Hawaii Long Range Land Transportation Plan.

DOT previously initiated a study which determined that widening Kuakini Highway from two to four lanes would require acquisitions from over 150 property owners and funding in excess of \$150 million. The DOT terminated the widening study due to infeasibility. As the DOT has insufficient Highway funds to proceed, the DOT requests general funds if the project moves forward. If the Legislature appropriates \$30 million, the DOT estimates that it can add an additional lane and contraflow within the limits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

REBECCA VILLEGAS
Council Member
District 7, Central Kona



PHONE: (808) 323-4267
FAX: (808) 323-4786
EMAIL: Rebecca.villegas@hawaiicounty.gov

LATE

HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

*West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy.
Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740*

February 10, 2021

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL
ON SB 1011, RELATING TO MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR HIGHWAY WIDENING
Committee on Transportation
Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, February 11, 2021
3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair Dela Cruz, and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 1011, a measure making an appropriation for highway widening. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Hawai'i County Council and Chair of the Hawai'i County Council Climate Resilience and Natural Resource Management Committee.

The purpose of this measure is to establish and appropriate the necessary funds to the department of transportation to widen Queen Kaahumanu highway and Kuakini highway between Henry street and Kamehameha III road on the island of Hawai'i.

These particular stretches of roadways have been on-going hazardous problems in our community. The short 5.6 mile drive from Henry street to Kamehameha III road usually takes 10 minutes, and it can take our residents up to an hour in stop-and-go traffic to travel this short distance. On our rural island, these are 2 of the few areas we have morning and Pau Hana traffic.

Kuakini Highway is prone to flooding almost every time it rains, and our County has to close the road for the public's safety. The water run off is especially bad in front of Pottery Terrance which is a 4 way intersection (with only 2 ways with a stop sign) on this highway in front of a commercial shopping center, which has resulted in multiple accidents from cars hydroplaning and crossing the center line or ending up in the bushes on the side of the road.

Our 3rd option to drive this route is Ali'i drive, which is in our Tsunami Evacuation Area. Our community desperately needs to widen and expand Queen Kaahumahu highway and Kuakini highway as these are the evacuation routes for the area with the most residents and tourists per capita.

Hawai'i County is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Traffic congestion has a number of negative effects, as a non-productive activity for most people, congestion reduces regional economic health. Delays, which may result in late arrival for employment, meetings, and education, resulting in lost business, disciplinary action or other personal losses. Traffic congestion leads to greater emotional health effects, mostly stress (80.4%) and aggressiveness (52.2%). Transport-related air-pollution contributes to an increased risk of death, particularly from cardiopulmonary causes, and the increased risk on non-allergenic respiratory symptoms and disease.

For the reasons stated above I urge the Committee on Transportation to support this measure as well. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.



Rebecca Villegas
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

Nancy W Sweatt & Ronald W. McLoughlin
75-5822 Pelekila Pl.
Kailua Kona, HI 96740
dolphinancy@gmail.com/ronmcl@outlook.com

Feb. 9, 2021

Testimony for SB 1011

Senate Committee on Transportation

Making an Appropriation for Highway Widening Island of Hawaii; Queen Kaahumanu Highway; Kuakini Highway; Expansion Appropriation

Aloha,

We **Support** widening Queen Kaahumanu Highway and Kuaikini Highway from Henry Street to Kamehameha III road on the Island of Hawaii.

We drive this section of road multiple times a day. The size of the road is not suitable to the amount of traffic daily. It has severe bottlenecks. There is danger for motorists navigating the variety of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. Accidents are frequent.

Recently I observed a Kona Transport Truck blocking an emergency medical vehicle at the intersection of Queen Kaahumanu and Henry Street. There were so many cars and space so narrow, the truck could not make way for the emergency vehicle. All other vehicles tried to maneuver to make space, however there was no where to go. Everyone was trapped. It was a mess.

Widening this section of Roadway is urgent for the safety of the residents and visitors in Kailua Kona, Big Island of Hawaii.

Thank You!

Nancy W. Sweatt

Ronald W McLoughlin

SB-1011

Submitted on: 2/10/2021 6:41:30 AM

Testimony for TRS on 2/11/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tracy Tuttle	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in for my support of SB1011

MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR HIGHWAY WIDENING.

Appropriates funds to the department of transportation to widen Queen Kaahumanu highway and Kuakini highway between Henry street and Kamehameha III road on the island of Hawaii.

The Big Island leads the state in the largest population growth for many years. Mostly on the west side. Some of the largest employers (the airport, luxury hotels) are north of Kona requiring commutes on Queen Kaahumanu Highway where the road is only one way each direction. Even with less tourists on island there are still back ups from Kam III to Henry daily. It can get dangerous when people try to overtake other cars. It is also the route to Kona Community Hospital and it slows down the emergency vehicles when there is little or no space to move over. Widening this road would be a great thing for Kona!

LATE

SB-1011

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 9:30:14 AM

Testimony for TRS on 2/11/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Kirstin Kahaloa	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

On behalf of my family and my neighbors, I write in strong support of SB 1011.

The two-lane portion of Queen Ka'ahumanu/Kuakini between Henry St. and Kamehameha III Rd. is a major bottleneck in a rapidly growing region. But this isn't only about traffic.

From our home, we hear many ambulances a day pass through en route to Kona's only hospital. There are many portions of the two-lane portion of the highway where it is difficult and unsafe to pull aside to let ambulances and other emergency vehicles through.

As the mother of a two-year-old and the daughter-in-law of a combat veteran with pulmonary issues, rapid access to emergency medical care is top of mind for me. We owe it to our community to make widening Queen Ka'ahumanu/Kuakini a priority.

Mahalo.

LATE

SB-1011

Submitted on: 2/11/2021 11:37:09 AM

Testimony for TRS on 2/11/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
janice palma-glennie	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

Aloha,

I'm ambivalent about this bill and proposed project. it greatly depends upon how the highway is done and if it will be used as justification for approving more development along it which will insure that it'll be as clogged as it is now in the not-so-distant future.

i don't see the Kona Community Development Plan being figured into the new mayoral administration's list of top priorities, nor do i see those as priorities for the new County Planning Director.

all of the highways in the world won't stop traffic woes as is clear by the four-lane clog-up that has nothing to do with the highway narrowing farther south. despite covid and claims that we don't have enough visitors, the road is jammed with rental cars and those in the service and construction industry serving them. if we don't come up with solutions to prevent traffic and keep people out of cars, we're doomed to being Oahu -- more cars, more traffic, more of everything that drags our communities down.

mahalo and sincerely,

janice palma-glennie

kailua-kona