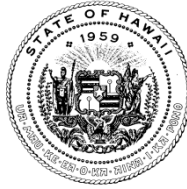


DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR



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

April 7, 2021  
11:15 AM  
State Capitol, Videoconference

**S.C.R. 235, S.D. 1**  
**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO EVALUATE**  
**TRAFFIC CONGESTION, HIGHWAY FLOODING, AND ROAD SAFETY ISSUES ON**  
**HAWAI'I ISLAND.**

House Committee on Transportation

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** S.C.R. 235, S.D. 1 and offers comments. S.C.R. 235, S.D. 1 requests the DOT to evaluate traffic congestion, highway flooding, and road safety issues on Hawaii Island.

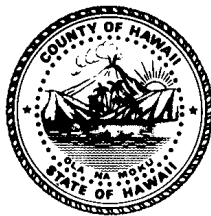
The DOT supports efforts to improve the operations, capacity, and safety of its roadways. Because needs of the State Highway System exceed available resources, the DOT has identified safety and preservation projects as being the highest priority for funding. Capacity is identified as a need and potential improvements are identified in the Hawaii Long Range Land Transportation Plan. For safety projects to be considered for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, the project should be identified from the DOT Highway Safety Improvement Program.

As mentioned by the resolution, the DOT previously started a study during which it was determined that widening Kuakini Highway from two to four lanes would require acquisitions for over 150 property owners and funding in excess of \$150 million. The DOT terminated the widening study due to infeasibility. The resolution requests the DOT look into narrowing the existing lanes to a uniform width of 10'. The lanes widths in that section of roadway currently vary between 10'-12.5'. Because the lanes vary in width, it may be unlikely to provide a consistent additional width to allow for widening.

The resolution requests DOT address flooding at the intersection of Mamalahoa Highway and Meleana Place. Although DOT is in the process of acquiring this portion of the highway from Hawaii County for consistency and continuity, while exchanging portions on the State system that do not fall within our mission, this area is currently under the jurisdiction of the County of Hawaii and is not on the State Highway System. Therefore, it would be appropriate for the County of Hawaii to conduct this study.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**Holeka Goro Inaba**  
Council Member, District 8, N. Kona



Office: (808) 323-4280  
Email: holeka.inaba@hawaiicounty.gov

## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

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

April 5, 2021

Committee on Transportation  
Representative Henry J. C. Aquino, Chair  
Representative Greggor Ilagan, Vice Chair  
Hawai'i State Capitol, Conference Room 423  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Re: Testimony in support of SCR235 SD1, REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION TO EVALUATE TRAFFIC CONGESTION, HIGHWAY FLOODING,  
AND ROAD SAFETY ISSUES ON HAWAI'I ISLAND.  
Videoconference Hearing: April 7, 2021 at 10:15 a.m

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of myself and the constituents of Council District 8 in North Kona, I would like to express support for the above referenced resolution, and submit a brief testimony as follows:

I would like to express support for SCR235 SD1 that requests the Department of Transportation to evaluate Kuakini Highway and Queen Ka'ahumanu Highway between Henry Street and Kamehameha III Road on Hawai'i island and identify best options for traffic reduction. This resolution also requests the Department of Transportation to prepare a plan to remediate flooding issues, and to add this project to the Highway Safety Improvement Program for consideration into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.

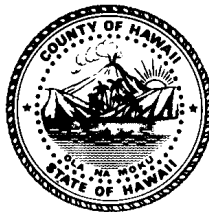
I therefore strongly urge the passing of SCR235 SD1.

Sincerely,

---

HOLEKA GORO INABA, Council Member  
District 8, North Kona

REBECCA VILLEGAS  
Council Member  
District 7, Central Kona



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

## HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL

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

April 6, 2021

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS  
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL  
ON SCR235 SD1, RELATING TO REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO  
EVALUATE TRAFFIC CONGESTION, HIGHWAY FLOODING, AND ROAD SAFETY ISSUES ON  
HAWAI'I ISLAND  
Committee on Transportation  
Wednesday, April 7, 2021  
11:15 a.m.  
Conference Room 423 Via Videoconference

Aloha Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SCR235 SD1, relating to Department of Transportation; Kuakini Highway; Traffic; Study; Hawaii Island; Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. 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 request that the Department of Transportation evaluate traffic congestion, highway flooding, and road safety issues on Hawai'i Island.

These stretches of roadways have been on-going hazardous problems in our community. Kuakini Highway is prone to flooding almost every time it rains, and our County has had to close the road for the public's safety. The water runoff 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. This has resulted in multiple accidents from cars hydroplaning and crossing the center line or ending up in the brush on either side of Kuakini Highway.

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.

Our Kona community request that our legislature urge our Department of Transportation to evaluate traffic congestion, highway flooding, and road safety issues for Queen Kaahumahu highway and Kuakini highway as these are the evacuation routes for the area with the most residents and tourists per capita.

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

**SCR-235-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 10:34:36 AM

Testimony for TRN on 4/7/2021 11:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
MELYNDA DANT	Fair Wind Cruises	Support	No

Comments:

This is a major 2 lane highway used by thousands daily. As we travel from Keauhou to Kailua and further north for purchasing supplies from various wholesalers we are delayed regularly. Traffic can be at a stop and then a crawl several different times every day. If our orders are not large enough the wholesalers do not want to deliver to our Keauhou Bay location, and since we are mandated by the state to offer only 50% of our customer capacity due to COVID we can not purchase and use large quantities of supplies before they spoil.

As our visitors start to come back, there is even more traffic congestion and it only will get worse once schools are back in full session. Our infrastructure requires repair and expansion desperately. Please place the needed attention on our roads today.

Sincerely,

Melynda Dant

**SCR-235-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 10:59:17 AM

Testimony for TRN on 4/7/2021 11:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Leah Daniel	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

This is from the 2008 final EA on the La'Aloa Extension.

SUMMARY The County of Hawai'i proposes to extend La'aloa Avenue in North Kona in the mauka direction 1,500 feet to connect to Kuakini Highway. The proposed design would also address motorvehicle, pedestrian and bicyclist safety through appropriate cross-sections and traffic calming devices on both the existing and extension sections. Presently there are no connectors between Kuakini Highway and Ali'i Drive for the approximately 3.5 miles between Royal Poinciana Drive and King Kamehameha III Road, producing traffic congestion and poor Level of Service (LOS) on Ali'i Drive and the La'aloa area. Traffic levels are forecast to rise and worsen this situation unless new mauka-makai connectors are built. The project would provide a needed connector between Ali'i Drive and Kuakini Highway and reduce traffic congestion in the vicinity. Three route alignment alternatives and two cross-section alternatives have been studied. A year-long context-sensitive solution process has resulted in recommendation of one alternative for construction. The project would decrease traffic congestion and would increase overall traffic safety for the area. No scenic resources, rare ecosystems or threatened or endangered species would be affected, and effects to historic sites would be mitigated through data recovery and interpretation. Short-term impacts to water quality, air quality, traffic congestion and noise can be mitigated to minor levels by proper adherence to construction permits and other mitigation. The project is consistent with the Hawai'i County General Plan.

Obvious to anyone that lives in this area is the fact that the increase in traffic over the last 13 years has only gotten worse. As someone who lives on Queen Kalama, I can attest to the fact that going into and coming home from town is a nightmare any time of day now.

Over the past year, the upside of the pandemic was being able to drive to essential businesses with relative ease. There needs to be a better balance of tying proper infrastructure to development plans and having the upgrades to infrastructure in place prior to approving more growth.

**LATE**

**SCR-235-SD-1**

Submitted on: 4/6/2021 11:15:45 AM

Testimony for TRN on 4/7/2021 11:15:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Meredith Buck	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support SCR235.