



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 02/09/2023

**Time:** 02:30 PM

**Location:** 309 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE

**Committee:** House Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** HB 0743 RELATING TO EDUCATION.

**Purpose of Bill:** Requires the department of education to establish an electric school bus pilot program to provide certain complex areas with ownership and control of electric school buses. Appropriates funds.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) would like to provide comments on HB 743, requiring an electric school bus pilot program.

In collaboration with our school bus providers, the Department has moved forward with efforts to use electric school buses. Through participating in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean School Bus Program, the Department was awarded nearly five million dollars to recycle twenty diesel buses with clean energy alternatives. The EPA had specific requirements to be eligible for the funding, which the Department could only meet with the participation of our school bus contractors.

The Department currently does not employ school bus drivers, maintenance teams, or driver trainers. The Full-Time Equivalents for these positions would also need to be included in the appropriation for the Department to facilitate a successful pilot. The maintenance of electric buses requires special training and facilities that do not currently exist on Hawaii Island.

Additionally, the Department does not own facilities in the areas designated to maintain a bus base yard. It would therefore need funding to purchase a secure base yard and personnel to maintain it. At this time, base yards the Department uses do not have sufficient technology to maintain an electric fleet, nor the necessary infrastructure to support electric buses and the required charging stations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.





Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
Thursday, February 9, 2023 — 2:30 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports HB 743, Relating to Education.**

Dear Chair Woodson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono supports HB 743**, which requires the Department of Education to establish an Electric School Bus Pilot Program to provide certain complex areas with ownership and control of electric school buses.

Ulupono supports clean, alternative fuel transportation, as ground transportation makes up a significant portion of Hawai'i's reliance on imported oil and is the largest contributor to our state's greenhouse gas emissions. Ulupono finds that zero-emission vehicles of all kinds, such as electric school buses, are an important avenue to address Hawai'i's pressing climate issues, align with the State's energy and environmental goals, and provide immediate benefits to Hawai'i. This measure can also build upon the Hawai'i Department of Education's recent successful \$4.99 million grant from the Environmental Protection Agency to begin electrifying school bus fleets across the islands. This grant will help with the purchase of 20 electric buses and includes \$260,000 for electric charging infrastructure.<sup>1</sup> By tackling the top source of greenhouse gas emissions in ground transportation, this measure continues Hawai'i's commitment to a clean, renewable future and helps accelerate that transition.

As Hawai'i's energy issues become increasingly complex and challenging, we appreciate this committee's efforts to look at policies that support the continued adoption of clean transportation throughout the islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Director of Government Affairs

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hawaiipublicschools.org/ConnectWithUs/MediaRoom/PressReleases/Pages/electric-school-buses.aspx>

**HB-743**

Submitted on: 2/8/2023 1:15:11 PM

Testimony for EDN on 2/9/2023 2:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sherry Pollack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB743 that requires the department of education to establish an electric school bus pilot program to provide certain complex areas with ownership and control of electric school buses.

This measure addresses a school bus shortage that currently negatively impacts student attendance, causes difficulties for working parents who must juggle jobs and school drop-offs, intensifies traffic, and increases greenhouse gas emissions. Establishing an electric school bus pilot program would effectively address these problems.

Please pass this important measure. Mahalo.