

Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair
Committee on Transportation

Mona Heydarian

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Support for H.C.R. No. 182, Relating to Improve Sidewalk Maintenance

I am Mona Heydarian, a law student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa William S. Ruchardson School of Law. As a student without a car I often walk to many of my destinations. For this reason I support H.C.R. No. 182, Relating to Improve Sidewalk Maintenance, which would increase pedestrian safety, improve the aesthetic of the State's streets and roadways, and allow for increased mobility for residents and visitors.

I support that the City and County of Honolulu convene a working group to develop recommendations to improve sidewalk maintenance. Having a working group to ultimately improve sidewalk maintenance could increase pedestrian safety by giving pedestrians areas to walk safely rather than walking alongside cars in a road or on unpaved lanes next to streets. Additionally, if there is constant maintenance on the sidewalks then this decreases the likelihood of pedestrians getting injured from an unkempt or broken sidewalk. Not only will maintenance on sidewalks potentially improve safety, it will also improve the aesthetic of the State's streets and roadways by being well kept and maintained.

According to some studies one of the biggest monthly expenses for many residents is the cost of transportation in Hawai'i. For instance, a study done by the Ulupono Initiative in 2021 showed the cost of owning a vehicle in Hawaii is \$8,100 annually. The Honolulu Civil Beat did an analysis and found that an estimated cost to own a 2015 Tacoma was about \$6,800 a year. This estimate did not include parking expenses or debt payments. With better access to sidewalks individuals like students, who can easily commute by walking, will not need to rely on owning a car and can save a decent amount of money. Not only will students benefit from improved sidewalks but visitors will also benefit. If the sidewalks are well maintained visitors are more likely to walk where they need to go as most of the things needed are in one central area, such as food and lodging. This can also decrease the traffic if more people use the sidewalks.

By creating a working group to develop recommendations to improve sidewalk maintenance, the City and County can help improve the lives of all people who use the sidewalks. For these reasons I support H.C.R. No. 182. Thank you for your time and giving me an opportunity to testify.