



**TESTIMONY BY:**

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

February 8, 2022  
3:00 P.M.  
State Capitol, Teleconference

**S.B. 2516**  
**RELATING STATE HIGHWAYS**

Senate Committee(s) on Agriculture and Environment & Transportation

The Department of Transportation (DOT), **opposes** this bill that establishes a goal within the DOT for 75% of state highways to be covered with tree canopies by 2045. The DOT opposes the bill for the following reasons:

- Safety hazards that could be caused by placement of trees along the system to hit the arbitrary goal as trees function as immovable obstacles in many crashes, particularly on rural roads.
- Safety hazards that will be caused by a significant increase in falling or overhanging branches that can obstruct roadways, especially in high wind conditions.
- Insufficient funding to cover the cost of increased tree installation, upkeep, maintenance, and replacement required to hit the goal.
- Insufficient funding to cover the increase in maintenance issues caused by roadside tree roots buckling sidewalks and degrading pavement.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**LATE**



## Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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Monday, February 7, 2022

To: The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Chair  
The Honorable Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair  
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Transportation

Re: **SB 2516 – RELATING TO STATE HIGHWAYS**  
Hearing: Tuesday, February 8, 2022, 3:00 p.m., Via Videoconference

Position: **Strong support**

Aloha, Chairs Gabbard and Lee, Vice Chairs Nishihara and Inouye, and Members of the Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Transportation:

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i stands in strong support of SB 2516. This measure would establish a goal within the Hawaii Department of Transportation for seventy-five per cent of state highways to be covered with tree canopies by 2045.

In reducing urban temperatures by 2045 to combat the climate crises, this measure would require the Department of Transportation to incorporate tree canopies and foliage over seventy-five per cent of all state highways when planning, designing, and implementing ground transportation infrastructure.

For these reasons, the Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i supports SB 2516 as it will reduce urban temperature and assist in combating the climate crisis through soil health and carbon sequestration by the planting of tree canopies and foliage along over seventy-five per cent of all state highways. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

*Melodie Adyja*

*Alan Burdick*

Co-Chairs, Environmental Caucus of the  
Democratic Party of Hawai'i

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**HIPHI Initiatives**

Coalition for a  
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community Health  
Worker Initiative

COVID-19 Response

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol Free  
Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Hui

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Food Security Coalition

Date: February 7, 2022

To: Senator Mike Gabbard, Chair  
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Agriculture and Environment

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

Re: Support for SB 2516, Relating to State Highways

Hrg: February 8, 2022 at 3:00 PM via videoconference

The Obesity Prevention Task Force, a program of Hawai'i Public Health Institute<sup>i</sup> (HIPHI), is in **support of SB 2516**, which establishes a goal within the Hawai'i Department of Transportation for seventy-five percent of state highways to be covered with tree canopies by 2045.

Hawai'i must move away from an auto-centric society and invest in infrastructure that prioritizes public transportation, biking, and walking. The goal of seventy-five percent of state highways in Hawai'i to be covered by tree canopies as set out by SB 2516 aligns with the Hawai'i Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan 2030<sup>ii</sup> and lends to greater infrastructure for cycling and walking. Trees along highways create shade for pedestrian and bicycle-friendly paths, and may increase safety by a serving as a physical barrier between pedestrians/cyclists and cars. Canopy trees along highways also improves air quality, as doing so has been shown to reduce pollution.<sup>iii</sup>

For these reasons, we respectfully request that the Committees **PASS** SB 2516.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo,

Amanda Fernandes, JD  
Policy and Advocacy Director

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<sup>i</sup> Created by the legislature in 2012, the Obesity Prevention Task Force is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations, and works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents. The Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI) convenes the Task Force and supports and promotes policy efforts to create a healthy Hawai'i.

Hawai'i Public Health Institute is a hub for building healthy communities, providing issue-based advocacy, education, and technical assistance through partnerships with government, academia, foundations, business, and community-based organizations.

<sup>ii</sup> Hawai'i State Department of Health. Physical Activity and Nutrition Plan 2030 (Published June 2021). [https://hhsp.hawaii.gov/assets/pdf/HHSP\\_PAN\\_Plan\\_WEB.pdf](https://hhsp.hawaii.gov/assets/pdf/HHSP_PAN_Plan_WEB.pdf).

<sup>iii</sup> Baldauf, R. (2017). Roadside vegetation design characteristics that can improve local, near-road air quality. *Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment*, 52, 354-361.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 5:42:35 PM

Testimony for TRS on 2/8/2022 3:00:00 PM

**LATE**

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Janel Sterbentz	Testifying for Hawaii Bicycling League	Support	No

Comments:

Tree canopy reduces the heat island effect which saves money due to lower energy costs and health costs. It provides a more comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists which likely increases active transportation.

Mahalo

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/6/2022 9:37:31 AM

Testimony for TRS on 2/8/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Climate Protectors Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

Trees, especially trees shading roadways, are important for sequestering carbon and reducing warming. The Climate Protectors Hawai'i support setting a goal for increased trees to shade roadways.

**SB-2516**

Submitted on: 2/7/2022 1:41:13 PM

Testimony for TRS on 2/8/2022 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Remote Testimony Requested</b>
Lois Crozer	Individual	Comments	No

Comments:

I get that concrete is hot and holds heat but better we stop monster houses and people paving every inch of their properties. Also, the cost to do this would be \$\$ plus MAINTENANCE with the leaves falling on the street.