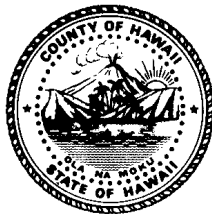


REBECCA VILLEGAS
Council Member
District 7, Central Kona



PHONE: (808) 323-4267
FAX: (808) 323-4786
EMAIL: 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

February 23, 2022

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL
ON SB 2895 SD1, RELATING TO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS
Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, February 24, 2022 at 10:00am

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committees:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2895 SD1. 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 Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1962 required metropolitan planning organizations to be established for any urbanized area with a population over 50,000 as a condition to eligibility for federal transportation financial assistance. Metropolitan planning organizations to serve as a forum for promoting collaboration among local communities and government agencies and to direct federal funds toward projects that increase access to opportunity and prosperity through improved multimodal pedestrian, bicycle, and transit options.

According to the 2020 United States Census, which provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for communities throughout the nation, the population of the county of Hawai'i has grown to over two hundred thousand; thus moving local officials to reexamine the feasibility of a metropolitan planning organization to address the many transportation infrastructure and connectivity challenges exasperated by its growing population and topography.

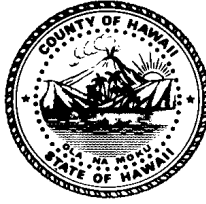
For the reasons stated above I urge the Committee on Ways and Means to support this measure as well. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Villegas".

Rebecca Villegas
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

From the office of -
Council Member
District 3



Office: (808) 961-8396
Fax: (808) 961-8912
Email: sue.leeloy@hawaiicounty.gov

SUSAN L.K. LEE LOY

25 Aupuni Street, Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

February 22, 2022

The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Support for SB 2895 relating to a Metropolitan Planning Organization

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2895, relating to a metropolitan planning organization [MPO] within the County of Hawai'i, with consideration of comments submitted by County of Hawai'i Mass Transit Administrator, Mr. John Andoh.

In our work on the Hawai'i County Council to update and modernize our construction codes, it has become clear that we have many challenges facing us with our transportation infrastructure and connectivity. With our growing population and topography, I am hopeful we can substantially address these issues by creating a process for the Department of Transportation [HDOT] to authorize the formation of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations [RTPO]. As stated by Mr. Andoh, this would dovetail with the County's Planning Department's efforts in performing this assessment and consider the evaluation of the formation of a RTPO as the first step towards a MPO.

The allowance of a RTPO could set the framework towards creating a formal MPO once the population reaches the threshold; likely in the 2030 census. In the meantime, the RTPO could operate on the same principles as a MPO with a policy board, technical advisory committee and citizen advisory committee to support the work.

The importance of this collaborative work cannot be minimized. The decisions and direction set through this endeavor will directly impact projects like affordable housing and public infrastructure, and the ability of public and private sectors to deliver those projects in a timely manner when they are needed the most. Therefore, this kuleana is definitely worthy of our support.

Mahalo, again, for the opportunity to recognize the collaborative efforts needed between the State and County as we evolve our transportation and mobility planning for Hawai'i Island. Our

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work is ongoing and there is much to be done. By partnering and focusing our efforts to allow HDOT to implement RTPOs, we will make the best use of our precious resources and develop viable solutions for a more efficient and effective transportation system. Our residents deserve access and opportunities to live in a vibrant Hawai‘i.

Aloha Piha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan L.K. Lee Loy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" written in a smaller, more legible script, and the last name "Lee Loy" written in a larger, more stylized cursive font.

Susan "Sue" L.K. Lee Loy
Council Member, County of Hawai‘i, District 3
Chair, Committee on Public Works and Mass Transit
Chair, Committee on Human Services and Social Services

SB-2895-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2022 1:15:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/24/2022 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	No

Comments:

We will remain Rural or Ag!!