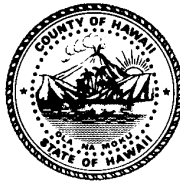


Mitchell D. Roth
Mayor



John C. Andoh
Mass Transit
Administrator

County of Hawai'i Mass Transit Agency

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March 14, 2022

TESTIMONY REGARDING METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL 2895

The County of Hawai'i Mass Transit Agency would like to offer comments regarding SB 2895. It is commendable that the Legislature is recognizing the growth of Hawai'i County based on previous action of the County Council. Since urbanization will be coming to Hawai'i County in the next 20 years, the formation of a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) is important.

Since the Legislature is recommending the formation of a MPO, the Mass Transit Agency offers two suggestions for consideration into this Bill:

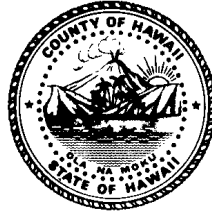
1. Under Section 2, incorporate language to allow for the intergovernmental task force to study the formation of policy to allow Hawai'i Department Of Transportation (HDOT) to implement a Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) in the event that Hawai'i County does not receive an urbanized area in the 2020 census. Best practices from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration should be included in the report to the legislature regarding the formation of a MPO or a RTPO. Details on RTPOs are available here: <https://ruraltransportation.org/about-rtpos/rtpo-states/> and https://www.planning.dot.gov/documents/RTPO_factsheet_master.pdf.
2. Under Section 3, include participation on the intergovernmental task force, the Directors of the Hawai'i County Planning Department and Hawai'i County Mass Transit Agency or their designee since they will also be potential beneficiaries of a future MPO or RTPO. Their participation will demonstrate a multi-modal transportation front which a MPO thrives on.

You may reach me at 808.961.8555 or email john.andoh@hawaiicounty.gov with any questions on this testimony.

Mahalo,

John Andoh,
Mass Transit Administrator & General Manager

REBECCA VILLEGAS
Council Member
District 7, Central Kona



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HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL
West Hawai'i Civic Center, Bldg. A
74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy. Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740

March 15, 2022

TESTIMONY OF REBECCA VILLEGAS
COUNCIL MEMBER, HAWAI'I COUNTY COUNCIL
ON SB 2895 SD2, RELATING TO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS
Committee on Transportation
Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 10:30am

Aloha Chair Aquino and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2895 SD2. 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.

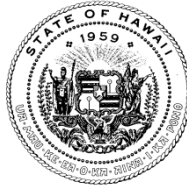
For the reasons stated above I urge the Committee on Transportation to support this measure as well. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (808) 323-4267.

Mahalo for your consideration.

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

Rebecca Villegas
Council Member, Hawai'i County Council

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR



TESTIMONY BY:

JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

Deputy Directors
ROSS M. HIGASHI
EDUARDO P. MANGLALLAN
PATRICK H. MCCAIN
EDWIN H. SNIFFEN

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

March 16, 2022
10:30 A.M.

State Capitol, Conference Room 423/Teleconference

S.B. 2895, S.D. 2
RELATING TO METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS

House Committee on Transportation

The DOT **opposes** this measure that creates a temporary intergovernmental task force to assist in the establishment and certification of a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the County of Hawaii. The department considers that this measure proposes a conflict with federal law and regulations of MPOs.

The DOT supports collaboration among communities and government agencies to direct federal funds toward transportation projects that increase access to opportunity and prosperity through improved multimodal pedestrian, bicycle, and transit options, the establishment of an MPO for the County of Hawaii may not comply with federal regulations. However, according to 23 Code of Federal Regulations 450.310, "...an MPO shall be designated for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 individuals (as determined by the Bureau of the Census)." The final 2020 Census data expected to be published in the next several months will determine whether this population threshold is met. If the threshold is met, no legislation is required to establish the MPO; rather, an MPO designation shall be made by agreement between the Governor and the county government.

The process required by this bill not only conflicts with federal regulations but also creates redundant and unnecessary processes. There are several feasible alternatives available to the County of Hawaii that do not require legislation. For example, a Regional Transportation Planning Organization is an option available to the County of Hawaii that can ensure transportation equity, conduct public involvement and non-metropolitan stakeholder involvement, develop and implement the regional long range land transportation plan, manage the regional Transportation Improvement Program, manage the work program, and participate in statewide planning activities. A Countywide Transportation Planning Process is yet another existing option to achieve some of the stated objectives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

SB-2895-SD-2

Submitted on: 3/15/2022 4:36:57 PM

Testimony for TRN on 3/16/2022 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rachel Roper	Hawaii Department of Transportation	Comments	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I am with DOT and am available for comments if needed.