



TESTIMONY BY:

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3:00 P.M.
State Capitol, Room 224/Teleconference

S.C.R. 96/S.R. 86
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO INCREASE LOCAL FUNDING FOR METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS AND TO PURSUE FURTHER FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE FEDERAL BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW

Senate Committee on Transportation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) offers **comments** to these resolutions requesting the DOT to increase local funding for metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) in order to pursue further funding opportunities under the Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

The DOT supports exploring new and maximizing existing funding opportunities and has been doing so for years. However, the DOT has concerns related to these resolutions because they conflict with existing processes. The amount of federal planning funds are distributed to the MPOs in Hawaii by agreement between the MPOs and the DOT, based on agreement among the implementing agencies, including the DOT, and County roadway and transit agencies. If the MPOs require additional funding, these existing agreements are evaluated and amended through discussion among the parties explained above. The DOT is not the sole decision maker in determining the funding distributions.

The resolution also states that the State has lost potential opportunities to receive additional federal funding for infrastructure projects due to MPO staffing needs. The DOT is not aware of lost federal funds. However, the state reports that we have received \$319 million in additional funding, over and above our normal federal authority between 2015 to 2022. These numbers far exceed any additional funding available to the State during the non-earmark era.

The State continues to coordinate meetings with counties and MPOs regularly to coordinate the statewide approach to BIL discretionary grant applications to minimize competition between counties, maximize collaboration of the projects, and increase Hawaii's opportunities under this historic legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

TO THE SENATE
THE THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2022
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair
NOTICE OF HEARING
HEARING SCR 96

POSITION SCR96: STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members,

I support the language of this senate concurrent resolution SCR96 as presented, the genesis of this this resolution was previous resolution crafted by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (Oahu MPO) Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). SCR96 will enhance our efforts to plan and build the infrastructure Oahu needs for a prosperous and sustainable future.

The new federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides record amounts of new funding for the planning and development of infrastructure related to transportation, energy, water, broadband, and others. To maximize this once-in-a-generation opportunity, we need to increase our region's project planning capacity. SCR 96 urges the State DOT to increase funding for Metropolitan Planning Organizations to pursue additional discretionary funding opportunities resulting from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

I would also support the idea that the Executive Director be asked to provide a legislative briefing to elaborate further on what benefits MPO's have in their ability in the contribution toward the overall goal for responsibility improving and sustainability maintaining Hawai'i's transportation and infrastructure through the passage of SCR 96.

Therefore, I urge this committee to pass senate concurrent resolution SCR96 out of committee, and that all changes that could be made to this resolution be added to strengthen the intent of this resolution. I thank you for taking the time to read this testimony and giving this resolution a hearing.

Mahalo,

Ken Farm

Speaking in my own capacity as a private citizen