

STAND. COM. REP. NO. **2011**

Honolulu, Hawaii

**APR 27 2023**

RE: GOV. MSG. NO. 519

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2023  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts, to which was referred Governor's Message No. 519, submitting for study and consideration the nomination of:

DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

G.M. No. 519 EDWIN SNIFFEN,  
for a term to expire at noon on 12-07-  
2026,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal history, resume, and statement submitted by Edwin Sniffen for service as the Director of Transportation.

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Edwin Sniffen from the Governor; Department of Taxation; Department of Land and Natural Resources; Department of Public Safety; Department of Human Services; Department of Human Resources Development; Department of Budget and Finance; Department of Health; Department of Agriculture; Department of Law Enforcement; Department of Hawaiian Home Lands; Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; Office of Enterprise Technology Services; Agribusiness Development Corporation; Hawaii Public Housing Authority; Hawaii Technology Development Corporation; one member of the House of Representatives; Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu; Mayor of the County of Kauai; Mayor of the County of Hawaii; Honolulu Board of Water Supply; Department of Facility Maintenance of the City and County of Honolulu; Department of Transportation Services of the City and

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County of Honolulu; Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization; Department of Public Works of the County of Kauai; Department of Planning of the County of Kauai; one member of the Hawaii County Council; Ho'omana Pono, LLC; Airlines Committee of Hawaii; Hawaii Regional Council of Carpenters; Hawaii Transportation Association; Airlines for America; Hawaiian Airlines, Inc.; Hawaii Harbors Users Group; Matson Navigation Company, Inc.; International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 100; Young Brothers, LLC; Elizabeth Kahanu Hawaiian Civic Club; Castle & Cooke Homes Hawai'i, Inc.; Hawaii Operating Engineers Industry Stabilization Fund Political Action Committee; Hawaiian Electric Industries; Sustainability Partners LLC; Pacific Resource Partnership; Hawaii Longshore Division of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 142; Oahu Motorsports Association; Smart Start LLC; Iron Workers Stabilization Fund; Hui 'Oihana - Hawai'i Island Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce; Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs; Ulupono Initiative; General Contractors Association of Hawaii; Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings Ltd.; Hawaii Building & Construction Trades Council; Waimea Christmas Parade; International Brotherhood of Electric Workers, Local 1186; Operating Engineers Local Union No. 3; Airport Concessionaires Committee; Hawai'i Community Foundation; American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials; International Longshore and Warehouse Union, Local 142; and one hundred eighty-one individuals. Your Committee received testimony in opposition to the nomination for the appointment of Edwin Sniffen from two individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Sniffen's experience and knowledge qualify him for appointment as the Director of Transportation. Mr. Sniffen has served as the interim Director of Transportation since December 2022 and has since worked closely with the leadership team of the Department to ensure Hawaii's transportation infrastructure operates efficiently and safely. Mr. Sniffen has served in the Department of Transportation for over a decade, most recently serving as the Deputy Director of Transportation - Highways Division. During his tenure, Mr. Sniffen oversaw seven hundred eighty employees and \$500 million in capital improvement projects, special maintenance projects, and operational funding. Additionally, Mr. Sniffen's scope of responsibilities also extended to leading the modernization efforts for highways statewide and leveraging highway resources toward the State's highest priorities, including the piloting of green materials for broad construction use and



sustainability initiatives; leveraging highways resources toward broadband infrastructure for underserved communities; joint initiatives with high schools and the University of Hawaii College of Engineering to promote STEM curriculum; improving public access to highways data; pursuing affordable housing partnerships; and maximizing federal funding for the State. Mr. Sniffen also served as a leader during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, where he led paperless initiatives and utilized highways facilities to provide timely updates and testing sites during the pandemic. More recently, Mr. Sniffen also assisted with the Red-Light Safety Program to ensure safety on state roads while also raising awareness on the dangers of distracted, impaired, and reckless driving. As Deputy Director, Mr. Sniffen also served as a representative of the State in high profile issues regarding highways funding, initiatives, facilities, and impacts, including serving as a primary point of contact with federal, state, and county agencies.

Your Committee also finds that Mr. Sniffen's experience in senior leadership, engineering, and government operations provide experience and institutional knowledge necessary to lead the Department of Transportation. As the Director of Transportation, Mr. Sniffen pledges to commit to address climate change and affirmed his vision to align Department of Transportation goals with statewide sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, including collaboration with other federal, state, and county agencies to ensure a proactive approach to the challenges ahead. Your Committee notes that Mr. Sniffen also identified other Department of Transportation priorities during his tenure, including traffic management and enforcement to protect the State's roadways; establishing and expanding safe routes for other modes of travel for pedestrians, bikers, keiki, and kupuna; and diversifying the locations of economic sectors across the State to alleviate traffic congestion in the State's urban cores.

Your Committee further finds that Mr. Sniffen is an active member of his community. Mr. Sniffen served as Chair of the Committee on Transportation System Security and Resilience of the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials Board and as Chair of the Audit Committee of the Western Association of State Highway Transportation Officials Board. Mr. Sniffen received a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from Santa Clara University and he is a licensed professional engineer.



Your Committee believes that Mr. Sniffen's previous experience in senior leadership, engineering, and large-scale government operations qualify him to serve as the Director of Transportation. As a leader seeking inter-departmental solutions for a wide range of issues such as funding, staffing, infrastructure, and daily operations, Mr. Sniffen's noted reputation as an innovator will allow the Department of Transportation to move forward. Mr. Sniffen's experience will benefit the Department of Transportation as it strives to fulfill its mission to support the State's transportation infrastructure and address rising challenges to the State's goals. Your Committee therefore recommends that Edwin Sniffen be appointed as the Director of Transportation based on his experience, knowledge, and commitment to public service.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts that is attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominee, has found the nominee to be qualified for the position to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nomination.

Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Transportation and  
Culture and the Arts,



CHRIS LEE, Chair



