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

March 2, 2023
9:50 A.M.
State Capitol, Room 016 & Videoconference

**S.B. 497, S.D. 1
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL VEHICLES**

Senate Committee on Judiciary

The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports with concerns** S.B. 497 to prohibit commercial passenger vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds from using the left-most lane on any roadway with two or more lanes with exceptions for commercial vehicles turning left or exiting. Although S.B. 497 has the potential to improve traffic flow and increase safety, the DOT has the following concerns on a blanket lane use restriction:

1. Section 291C-49(3) H.R.S. provides the authority necessary to restrict lane use through official signing;
2. Most roadways on Oahu were built prior to today's complete street or modern design and access management criteria. S.B. 497 will decrease the safety of our most vulnerable roadway users by placing more commercial passenger vehicles in the same or adjacent space they use. Many of our multi-lane roadways do not have adequate continuous bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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TESTIMONY OF J. ROGER MORTON
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BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
JUDICIARY

Thursday, March 2, 2023, 9:50 AM, Via Videoconference

TO: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair, Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary

RE: SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 497, SENATE DRAFT 1, RELATING TO COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

The Department of Transportation Services (DTS) of the City and County of Honolulu (City) supports Senate Bill 497, Senate Draft 1 (SB 497, SD1) relating to commercial vehicles.

DTS supports the intent of SB 497, SD1, which proposes to prevent large commercial vehicles from impeding the flow of traffic by restricting their operation in the left lane of multi-lane roadways. DTS supports the exemption provided to buses and van pools operated by the counties from the bill's restrictions since City buses and Handi-Vans, which serve paratransit riders, operate on a schedule that the riders depend upon. Allowing City buses and Handi-Vans the flexibility to continue to use the left lane in order to meet the scheduled stops will best serve the general ridership.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony in support.



March 2, 2023

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
ON SB 497 SD1 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL VEHICLES**

Aloha Chair Rhoads and committee members. I am Gareth Sakakida, Managing Director of the Hawaii Transportation Association (HTA) with over 350 transportation related members throughout the state of Hawaii.

Hawaii Transportation Association remains opposed to this bill.

Senate Draft 1 exempts “commercial vehicles occupying the left lane for the purpose of turning left or exiting, or preparing to turn left or exit.” This is absolutely critical to maintain the delivery of all commodities to retail, restaurant, hotel, etc. establishments which are located on either side of the street.

However, drivers are trained to be in the lane corresponding to the location of their next stop as soon as possible to preclude the need for last minute maneuvers or stopping and waiting because traffic in the needed lane will not permit the vehicle to change lanes.

Commercial vehicles have large blindspots which makes it a dangerous proposition to have to quickly change lanes. We need a long approach our next stop to create the safest driving environment. This is why our drivers need to be in the needed lane as soon as possible and why we need to have access to the left lanes throughout our road system.

A long approach is even more crucial on the freeways because of the speeds involved.

Traffic flow conflict is another concern that applies when traversing the freeway from the West end of Oahu. The left lane is the safest as traffic conflicts come from one direction. When surrounded by lanes of traffic the conflict can come from either side increasing the incidences of conflict. The right lane has the most conflict with traffic slowing for off ramps and speeding up at on ramps. In that scenario a large vehicle has little choice but to remain in a lower gear which will really slow things up there.

Mahalo.