



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

March 24, 2023
2:00 P.M.
State Capitol, Room 325 & Videoconference

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

House Committee on Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports with concerns** S.B. 497 S.D. 1 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 S.D. 1 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 S.D. 1 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.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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TESTIMONY OF J. ROGER MORTON
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
JUDICIARY & HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Friday, March 24, 2023, 2:00 PM, Via Videoconference

TO: Representative David A. Tarnas, Chair, Representative Gregg Takayama, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

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.

SB-497-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 2:00:20 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/24/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Jones	Hydroponics Alternatives LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Honorable Committee Members:

I present this testimony SUPPORTING SB497, SD1—as amended, but with date changes—which: A) Prohibits commercial vehicles weighing 10,000 or more pounds from driving in the left lane on all roadways with two lanes unless the commercial vehicle is able to maintain speed with existing traffic flow and is in the process of passing another vehicle; B) Provides exceptions for commercial vehicles turning or exiting left, or preparing to turn or exit left; and C) Prohibits commercial vehicles weighing ten thousand pounds or more from driving in the left lane on all roadways with three or more lanes with the exception of City buses and City van pool vehicles.

As a resident of Wai`anae since approximately 1997 (I was born/raised in Aiea), I have witnessed first-hand the expansion of the Hawai`i highway system between the Leeward Coast and East Honolulu. I firmly support this bill since my husband is a former long-haul trucker who hauled California produce to Florida and the East Coast AND Florida orange juice to the West Coast 2-3 times per week to pay for land in Hawai`i to farm. I noticed on many road trips with my parents and also my husband across the United States what I believe is an ideal traffic model in California that prohibits commercial vehicles from travelling in the number 3 to number 5 lanes (left to far left lanes). Any commercial vehicle was restricted to travel in the two right hand lanes (lanes 1 and 2) – only allowing for passing slower vehicles in lane 3. In the case of Hawai`i’s highway system and in my experience driving between Wai`anae and Honolulu since 1989, the State needs to impose similar commercial vehicle standards so that such vehicles should NOT travel in the left lane at ALL unless: a) passing other vehicles to their right; and/or b) in the case of buses, van pool/Handivan vehicles UNLESS such vehicles can maintain the same speed as other traffic. I believe, however, any form of TRUCK should be restricted to the 2 right lanes on 3-plus-lane-roads OR 1 right lane on 2-lane roads. In my experience, these restrictions will improve traffic flow, decrease traffic congestion, and assures the safety of all highway/roadway users.

For these key reasons I urge your Committee to please pass SB497, SD 1 – and to please change the effective date to ideally 07/01/2023, BUT not later than 07/01/2024 as ALL of us who use Hawai`i’s road and state highway system share an interest in improving traffic flow and reducing motor vehicle collisions as soon as possible.

Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting SB497, SD 1.

Nancy Jones

Hydroponics Alternatives LLC

PO Box 1472, Wai`anae, HI 96792 / Email: nancyhydroalt@gmail.com

TO: Members of the Committee Judiciary and Hawaiian Affairs

FROM: Natalie Iwasa, aka Bike Mom
808-395-3233

HEARING: 2 p.m. Friday, March 24, 2023

SUBJECT: SB 497, SD1, Commercial Vehicle Left Lane Prohibition - **OPPOSED**

Aloha Chair Tarnas and Committee Members,

Thank you for allowing the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 497, SD1, which would prohibit commercial vehicles weighing 10,000 pounds or more from using the left lane in many situations.

While I understand the intent of this measure, I am concerned it will actually make roadways less safe for bicyclists and pedestrians. For years I have been asking owners of the Waikiki Trolley, Roberts Hawaii and other tour operators to put policies in place for their drivers to use the next lane over from the right lane to allow enough room for them to safely pass bicyclists. This is especially important on narrower roadways or when traffic is moving fast.

Please do not pass this.

SB-497-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 10:27:32 AM

Testimony for JHA on 3/24/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stefanie Y Sakamoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of this bill. I live in Mililani, and it takes about an hour to drive to and from my job in downtown Honolulu everyday. Measures such as this one would probably help the flow of traffic. Thank you for your support.

SB-497-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/23/2023 1:52:57 PM

Testimony for JHA on 3/24/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Zeb Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Tarnas, Vice Chair Takayama, and Honorable Committee Members:

I present this testimony to SUPPORT of SB497, SD1—as amended, but with date changes—which: A) Prohibits commercial vehicles weighing 10,000 or more pounds from driving in the left lane on all roadways with two lanes unless the commercial vehicle is able to maintain speed with existing traffic flow and is in the process of passing another vehicle; B) Provides exceptions for commercial vehicles turning or exiting left, or preparing to turn or exit left; and C) Prohibits commercial vehicles weighing ten thousand pounds or more from driving in the left lane on all roadways with three or more lanes with the exception of City buses and City van pool vehicles.

My family and I have resided in Wai`anae since approximately 1989 and witnessed first-hand the expansion of the Hawai`i highway system between the Leeward Coast and East Honolulu. As a former long-haul trucker who hauled California produce to Florida and the East Coast AND Florida orange juice to the West Coast 2-3 times per week to pay for land in Hawai`i to farm, I firmly support this bill. My experience hauling loads through all 50 States and a 1-million-mile-safe-driving record exposed me to what I believe is an ideal traffic model in California that prohibits commercial vehicles from travelling in the number 3 to number 5 lanes (left to far left lanes). Any commercial vehicle was restricted to travel in the two right hand lanes (lanes 1 and 2) – only allowing for passing slower vehicles in lane 3. In the case of Hawai`i’s highway system and in my experience driving between Wai`anae and Honolulu since 1989, the State needs to impose similar commercial vehicle standards so that such vehicles should NOT travel in the left lane at ALL unless: a) passing other vehicles to their right; and/or b) in the case of buses, van pool/Handivan vehicles UNLESS such vehicles can maintain the same speed as other traffic. I believe, however, any form of TRUCK should be restricted to the 2 right lanes on 3-plus-lane-roads OR 1 right lane on 2-lane roads. In my experience, these restrictions will improve traffic flow, decrease traffic congestion, and assures the safety of all highway/roadway users.

For these key reasons I urge your Committee to please pass SB497, SD 1 – and to please change the effective date to ideally 07/01/2023, BUT not later than 07/01/2024 as ALL of us who use Hawai`i’s road and state highway system share an interest in improving traffic flow and reducing motor vehicle collisions as soon as possible.

Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony supporting SB497, SD 1.

Zeb Jones

PO Box 1462/ Wai`anae, HI 96792 / Email: zebbe3442@gmail.com