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

January 31, 2023
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Room 224 & Videoconference

**S.B. 497
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL VEHICLES**

Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

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. 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;
3. Recommend amending to add "(d) This section shall not apply to commercial vehicles occupying the left lane to turn left or exit, or preparing to turn left or exit."

This amendment would address the following:

- a. Reduce commercial passenger vehicles making last-minute lane changes or crossovers to enter left-turn only lanes or freeway exits. These commercial passenger vehicles are not as maneuverable as passenger vehicles and all motorists will be exposed to increased conflicts in these last-minute lane changes or crossovers; and
- b. Provide for commercial passenger vehicles turning left at locations where there is no left-turn lane. If unable to turn left, commercial passenger vehicles would need to take longer indirect routes and execute more turning maneuvers.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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TESTIMONY OF J. ROGER MORTON
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
Tuesday, January 31, 2023, 3:00 PM, Via Videoconference

TO: Senator Chris Lee, Chair, and Members of the Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

RE: COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL 497, RELATING TO COMMERCIAL VEHICLES

The Department of Transportation Services (DTS) of the City and County of Honolulu (City) provides the following comments on Senate Bill 497, relating to commercial vehicles.

DTS appreciates the intent of Senate Bill 497 to prevent large commercial vehicles from retraining the flow of traffic; however, to the extent that the term "commercial vehicle" could apply the City buses or to the Handi-Vans, DTS requests an exemption to the application of the bill's restrictions. City buses and the Handi-Vans, which serves paratransit riders, operate on time deadlines that provide riders with a level of reliability that the riders depend upon from the City's public transit system. Allowing City buses and Handi-Vans the flexibility to continue to use the left lane in order to meet the time deadlines would best serve the general ridership.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments on Senate Bill 497.



January 31, 2023

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
ON SB 497 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL VEHICLES**

Aloha Chair Lee 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 opposes this bill. Any vehicle that pays all registration and weight fees should be allowed to travel in any lane while observing legal speeds as traffic and other conditions permit.

On non-freeway roadways, there are no “fast lanes” versus “slow lanes.” Most of these roadways have a multitude of destinations on both sides of the street (e.g. King Street, Kapiolani Boulevard, Beretania Street, etc.).

Drivers are trained to get into a needed lane as early as possible to prevent being blocked out of the lane and preclude the need for sudden maneuvers or stopping and waiting because traffic in the needed lane will not permit the truck to change lanes.

After turning left to make a delivery, then returning to the road to continue on in the same direction originally headed, you must get into the left lane of that road. It is not a safe maneuver to charge across multiple lanes to remain out of the left lane.

On a freeway, when accessing left hand exits, we want drivers to get into the proper lane for exit as soon as it is safe to prevent the need for high speed lane changes. The freeway has exits that are accessed via the left lane like Aiea and Pearlridge going Westbound, and heading toward Waianae when the zipper lane is deployed, and to Mililani going Eastbound. We need to access these exits very early because of the speeds involved.

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.

Commercial vehicles serve people everywhere so must be able to travel everywhere. Commercial motor vehicles pay more taxes and fees than other vehicles and should not be offered less capacity on the roads and highways.

Mahalo.



TESTIMONY OF

LARRY S VERAY

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS

IN STRONG SUPPORT OF SB497

January 30, 2023

Aloha, Chair Chris Lee and Vice Chair Lorraine Inouye and committee members. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB497 in preparation of the hearing on Tuesday, January 31, 2023 at 3 PM. Although I am Chair for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21, I am submitting this testimony as an individual. This bill is extremely important as a creative and innovative way to improve public safety on our roadways which will save many lives of our citizens.

The intent of this bill is to prohibit commercial vehicles weighing ten thousand pounds or more 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. Prohibits commercial vehicles weighing ten thousand pounds or more from driving in the left lane on all roadways with three or more lanes.

With my 58 years of driving experience while driving all over the mainland, Hawaii and internationally in Japan, Korea, Australia and New Zealand, I can say this bill will save lives. Other countries have adopted this roadway policy because they too know large trucks driving in the center lane improves driving safety for all. I most strongly urge you to pass SB497.

Very respectfully,

Larry S. Veray