



**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097**

February 14, 2024
3:05 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 224

**S.B. 2894
RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION**

Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology

The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports the intent** of this measure and provides comments.

HDOT supports the use of alternative transportation options for commuters, particularly those that would help reduce the ground transportation carbon footprint during peak commuting hours.

The proposed bill requires the DOT to establish a state employee commuter benefits program. Our comments with the specific approach suggested by this bill, in its current form, are as follows:

- There is an existing program available to state employees, administered by the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) in coordination with all Executive Branch Departments, for a pre-tax transportation benefit pilot program (PTBP), posted online at <https://dhrd.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Guidelines-for-PTBP-Program-FINAL-040821.pdf>. This program already provides an employee benefit to take a pre-tax payroll deduction covering the cost of a monthly pass that can be used on TheBUS or on the Skyline Rail, and has been aligned with the HOLO Card program for a semi-automated renewal process in each Department where employees have registered for the benefit.

The PTBP also extends to the HandiVan system where HOLO cards can be used and provides a similar pre-tax benefit for the cost of employee participation in the Vanpool commuter program. The PTBP benefit is not available to employees who have assigned parking with a pre-tax parking payroll deduction for their personal vehicles in a State-controlled parking lot, and it is currently limited to state employees who live and work on Oahu. However, the basic framework

exists through this program that could be conceivably expanded to public transportation systems on the neighbor islands, those which have implemented similar monthly passes available through online systems such as the HOLO card system on Oahu.

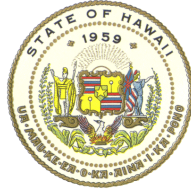
- The proposed bill does not include an appropriation. In the case of the current PTBP, it is funded by participating employee payroll contributions that have the benefit of being tax-free. A subsidized program providing partial or full coverage of costs would be at no cost to the employee, so the funds to support that cost would have to come from elsewhere.

DOT collected recent data, with the cooperation of the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) on participation levels and costs. The PTBP currently supports 292 state employees on Oahu who have registered with their departments for the benefit in the form of a monthly bus/rail pass on HOLO Card, which costs \$80 per person per month.

The annual cost of that benefit is therefore in excess of \$280,000 per year at current prices. We have no current accounting available on the existing participation in the HandiVan or Vanpool programs also covered by the PTBP. Likewise, if neighbor island participation, through available public transportation options in those communities, are also included in the program envisioned by this bill, would represent further direct costs that would need the support of identified funds.

- Existing agency roles and responsibilities in administration of benefits available to all state employees are not within the purview of DOT. To implement the new type of employee benefit envisioned by this bill, DOT respectfully suggests that this program be placed in DHRD, as their existing program could be modified and/or expanded to include the provisions of this bill. DHRD could also better ensure its implementation in a manner consistent with all the necessary considerations to effectively administer and operate a benefits program targeted on the wider inter-departmental workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION
COMMISSION
POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of
Leah Laramee
Coordinator, Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission

Co-Chairs:
Chair, DLNR
Director, OPSD

Commissioners:
Chair, Senate AEN
Chair, Senate WTL
Chair, House EEP
Chair, House WAL
Chairperson, HTA
Chairperson, DOA
CEO, OHA
Chairperson, DHHL
Director, DBEDT
Director, DOT
Director, DOH
Chairperson, DOE
Director, C+C DPP
Director, Maui DP
Director, Hawai'i DP
Director, Kaua'i DP
The Adjutant General
Manager, CZM

Before the Senate Committee on
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
AND
LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday February 14, 2024
3:05 PM
State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 224

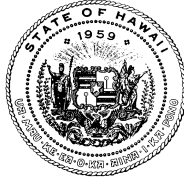
In support of
SENATE Bill 2894
RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

Senate Bill 2894 requires the Department of Transportation to establish a State Employee Commuter Benefits Program that provides free or subsidized public transit to state employees. **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure.**

The Commission is a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 different State and county departments, and Legislative committees. The Commission believes that supporting multimodal transportation is a key component of reaching our mandated 2045 carbon emission goals. The transportation sector is the largest source of climate pollution in the state, and alternative modes of transportation will help us reduce transportation emissions.

Rapid decarbonization of our transportation sector will require more than just switching to electric cars. One way to do that is to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) on our roads. This program provides options to state commuters to benefit from using existing infrastructure to get to work and reduce VMT. Expanded support to access mobility options is critical to an equitable and clean transportation future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P.O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov



**Testimony COMMENTING on S.B. 2894
RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION**

SENATOR CHRIS LEE, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS

SENATOR HENRY J.C. AQUINO, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Hearing Date: February 14, 2024

Room Number: Conference Room 224

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of
- 2 Transportation (DOT) for fiscal implications of implementation.
- 3 **Department Position:** The DOH offers comments on Senate Bill 2894 (S.B. 2894).
- 4 **Department Testimony:** The DOH offers comments on the potential health impacts of S.B. 2894
- 5 which would require the DOT to establish a State Employee Commuter Benefits Program that
- 6 provides free or subsidized public transit to state employees.

7 Despite Hawaii's favorable climate, geography, and reputation for active outdoor living,
8 only 24.8% of Hawaii residents, in 2019, met federal guidelines for physical activity.¹ People
9 who are physically active generally have better health outcomes and are at less risk for serious
10 chronic diseases and conditions; often the same conditions closely linked to severe COVID-19
11 outcomes.²

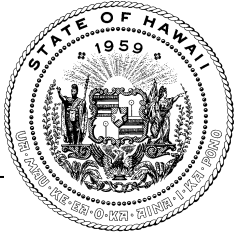
¹ Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019.

² CDC *About Physical Activity*. 2021.

1 The DOH promotes evidence-based, equity-focused active transportation policies.
2 Active transportation, including walking, biking, rolling, and taking transit provide everyday
3 opportunities for physical activity. Offering a State Employee Commuter Benefits Program that
4 subsidizes to offset transit, vanpool, or bicycle commuting can encourage employees to choose
5 modes of travel other than driving, in turn reducing out of pocket commuting costs, reducing
6 vehicle miles traveled, and providing increased opportunities for employees to include physical
7 activity into their daily routine.

8 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

9 **Offered Amendments:** None



HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

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Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Telephone: (808) 451-6648
Web: energy.hawaii.gov

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARK B. GLICK
CHIEF ENERGY OFFICER

Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
AND
LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY**

Wednesday, February 14, 2024
3:05 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

In Support of
SB 2894

RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION.

Chairs Lee and Aquino, Vice Chairs Inouye and Moriwaki, and members of the Committees, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports SB 2894 which requires the Department of Transportation to establish a State Employee Commuter Benefits Program that provides free or subsidized public transit to state employees.

Ground transportation remains a substantial contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Ground transportation sector tailpipe emissions constitute 38% of all transportation emissions in Hawai'i. In 2019 alone, ground transportation contributed 4.03 million metric tons of CO₂ equivalent (MMT CO₂e), making up 18.3% of the aggregated state gross total of 22.01 MMT CO₂e emissions.¹

Considerable efforts have been dedicated to enhancing the fuel efficiency of combustion engines, which has reduced the amount of needed fuel and associated emissions per VMT. Although the number of miles an average vehicle travels has not increased the total number of vehicles in Hawai'i has been increasing; thus, the total VMT

¹ State of Hawai'i, Department of Health. Greenhouse Gas Inventory [Hawai'i Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2005, 2018, and 2019 \(hawaii.gov\)](https://www.hawaii.gov/energy/2021/01/20/hawaii-greenhouse-gas-emissions-report-for-2005-2018-and-2019/)

LATE

has been increasing as well, partially offsetting the GHG emission saved through improved fuel efficiency. *Hawai'i Pathways to Decarbonization* report emphasizes the importance of reducing energy consumption, including VMT, as the most cost-effective approach to achieving Hawai'i's statutory target "to sequester more greenhouse gases than emitted as soon as practicable but no later than 2045".²

SB 2894 not only offers tax-exempt transit passes but also introduces a subsidy to offset the monthly cost of commuting via transit, vanpool, or bicycle. This aligns seamlessly with the objective of supporting less energy-intensive modes of transportation and reducing VMT. The proposed program provides commendable options to encourage state employees to choose sustainable commuting methods.

In addition to reducing individual carbon footprints, promoting the use of public transit and alternative commuting methods collectively contributes to the overarching goal of a greener and more sustainable future. The HSEO recognizes the importance of such initiatives in advancing our state's commitment to carbon neutrality.

To further enhance the bill's impact, we recommend the inclusion of micromobility options, which would provide state employees with additional choices, fostering flexibility in energy efficient commuting choices. Incorporating micromobility into the State Employee Commuter Benefits Program not only promotes a diverse range of sustainable transportation choices but also addresses the unique needs of short-distance commuting. This addition aligns seamlessly with the bill's objective of supporting less energy-intensive modes of transportation and reducing overall vehicle miles traveled.

One item HSEO would like to note is that we have reached out to fellow agencies to discuss which department is best situated to administer a state employee commuter benefit program. HSEO also notes that associated costs of implementing this measure are not addressed in this version. HSEO supports the purpose and substance of SB 2894, but defers to the Department of Budget and Finance on the fiscal impacts of the bill, particularly in not replacing or adversely impacting priorities indicated in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

² Hawai'i State Energy Office (2023). [Hawai'i Pathways to Decarbonization, Act 238 Report to the 2024 Hawai'i State Legislature \(Act 238 Report\)](#)

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Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Bill DeCosta
Ross Kagawa



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Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

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Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

February 9, 2024

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON
SB 2894, RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION
Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology
Wednesday, February 14, 2024
3:05 p.m.
Conference Room 224
Via Videoconference**

Dear Chair Lee, Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committees:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of SB 2894, Related to Transportation. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of SB 2894, which would greatly affect the Kaua'i community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2894. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:mn



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

Committee on Labor and Technology

February 14, 2024 at 3:05PM

Conference Room 224

SB 2894

Relating to Transportation

Dear Chairs Lee and Aquino, Vice Chairs Inouye and Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports SB 2894 and offers recommendations to improve the bill**, which would require the Department of Transportation to establish a State Employee Commuter Benefits Program that provides free or subsidized public transit to state employees.

This bill is consistent with several goals of the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan including support active and public transportation, promote an equitable transportation system, and improve air quality and protect environmental and cultural assets.¹ Providing a more robust and comprehensive commuter benefits program for State employees, will help incentivize more State employees to choose cleaner and more efficient modes of transportation, and provide more equitable transportation benefits. More State employees choosing cleaner and more efficient modes of transportation is particularly important to help the State address cost of living and equity concerns as well meet its carbon net-negative goal by 2045. Having access to a more robust and comprehensive commuter benefits program will help reduce household transportation costs for State employees, improve employee morale and retention, and make the State a more attractive employer.

For the State to meet its climate and energy goals, emissions from the ground transportation sector must be reduced. In 2019, emissions from transportation activities in Hawaii were 10.68 MMT CO₂ Eq, accounting for 54.9 percent of Energy sector emissions.² Domestic aviation accounted for the largest portion of transportation

¹ https://oahumpo.org/?wpfb_dl=2215

² https://health.hawaii.gov/cab/files/2023/05/2005-2018-2019-Inventory_Final-Report_rev2.pdf

emissions (46.4 percent) followed by ground transportation (37.7 percent).³ State employees commuting via bike, roll, and transit can play a significant role in reducing ground transportation emissions. According to the State Climate Commission Report, “Drivers of VMT and priority reduction strategies in Hawaii” approximately 30% of all trips taken are under 1 mile, 60% of all trips are under 3 miles, and 70% of all trips are under 5 miles.⁴ This is a tremendous opportunity for the State to support shifting those short trips made via vehicle to those that can be made via bike, roll, and transit, by providing greater financial incentives to choose to commute via cleaner and more efficient modes of transportation.

The OahuMPO would like to make the following recommendations to further improve the bill:

1. Add “bikeshare, or other micro-mobility devices” to Page 3, Line 3

Commuting via bikeshare provides many benefits, in addition to those a person can get via commuting with their own bike. In addition to the environmental and health benefits, commuting via bikeshare can be the most convenient option for State employees, as one does not need to worry about where to park their bike or the maintenance of their bike.

Adding “other micromobility devices” provides flexibility for how State employees may want to commute while also providing them the same benefits for choosing cleaner and more efficient modes of transportation. Micromobility devices may include scooters (electric or not), skateboards, etc.

2. Define micro-mobility devices in Section 2(c) on Page 3, Line 15

The definition used in 2024 Legislative Session’s SB 3021 is as follows for electric micromobility device, “Electric micro-mobility device means any ground transportation device such as a standing scooter, skateboard, board riding on a single or double wheels, or similar device which is powered either exclusively by electricity from a battery charged from an external source, or by electricity from a battery charged from an external source in addition to human power, which is designed to transport a single person, with a range exceeding not less than twelve miles and maximum speed of twenty-eight miles per hour, on which a person may reasonably commute to and from regular destinations.”

OahuMPO would recommend revising the language to be inclusive of those micromobility devices that are 100% human powered and adding the following

³ IBID.

⁴ https://climate.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/USCA_Hawaii_VMT_strategies_Feb22.pdf

language: “**Electric** micro-mobility device means any ground transportation device such as a standing scooter, skateboard, board riding on a single or double wheels, or similar device which is powered **either exclusively** by electricity from a battery charged from an external source, or by electricity from a battery charged from an external source in addition to human power, **or exclusively by human power**, which is designed to transport a single person, with a range exceeding not less than twelve miles and maximum speed of twenty-eight miles per hour, on which a person may reasonably commute to and from regular destinations.”

For your information, OahuMPO will be conducting an Oahu State Government Employee Transportation Demand Management Study in 2024-2025, which will identify other potential TDM strategies and transportation benefits for State employees for consideration by the Legislature.

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a long-range (25-year horizon) metropolitan transportation plan, referred to as the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP) that encourages and promotes a safe and efficient transportation system to serve the mobility needs of people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, and takes into consideration resiliency needs, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

SENATE COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION & CULTURE & THE ARTS
AND LABOR & TECHNOLOGY
Wednesday, February 14, 2024 — 3:05 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 2894, Relating to Transportation.

Dear Chair Lee, Chair Aquino, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports SB 2894, which requires the Hawai'i Department of Transportation to establish a State Employee Commuter Benefits Program that provides free or subsidized public transit to state employees.

Ulupono supports a wide range of multimodal transportation options and firmly believes this program will provide a multitude of benefits for state employees, in addition to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

This bill helps equalize currently unfair commute benefits:

- State employees who bus or bike to work are faced with significant financial disparities compared to their counterparts who drive, enjoying substantial parking subsidies. For example, monthly bus pass costs range from \$45 on Maui to \$80 on O'ahu, while uncovered reserved parking rates vary from \$25 on Maui to \$40 in Central O'ahu. Notably, private monthly parking rates in Urban Honolulu can soar to a minimum of \$120/month.¹ This results in a considerable subsidy, potentially up to four times greater than what multimodal commuters receive, taking into account both the cost of a transit pass and the value of the state's parking discount.
- Moreover, individuals who choose biking or busing as their mode of transportation are often among lower-income demographics. Consequently, parking subsidies disproportionately benefit employees on the higher end of the economic spectrum.
- These disparities in subsidies also play a role in influencing commuters' mode choices. Without parking subsidies, it is likely that more individuals would explore a broader set of transportation options, as they may be unwilling to bear the full (unsubsidized) financial burden associated with driving.²

¹ <https://www.spotangels.com/honolulu/honolulu-monthly-parking>

² <https://www.vtpi.org/parkpricing.pdf>

This bill lowers the cost of living in Hawai'i for state employees:

- If we can help our state employee households' shed cars, we can help them save up to \$16,200 per year while reducing the indirect public costs associated with vehicle ownership that amount to \$11.2 billion per year in Hawai'i.³
- In addition, housing can become more affordable if we don't dedicate as many land and financial resources to expensive and space-intensive car dependency.

This bill reduces climate impacts:

- Our state cannot rely exclusively on the electrification of the current transportation system to meet our climate goal of carbon net neutrality by 2045.⁴ We need those who can walk, bike, and bus to be able to do so as conveniently as possible, and therefore our state should help make that as attractive as possible.
- Past state employee profiles have noted that nearly 70% of state employees live on O'ahu.⁵ Among these individuals, many have access to several transportation options and are good candidates for transit. In addition to helping people bus and bike more, this means individuals will lean into more sustainable modes for all trips. For example, in Seattle, workers with transit benefits on average drive less all around, up to fewer 3 miles per day.⁶

We also recommend the legislation clarify that such subsidy could also be used for bikesharing/mobility device subscription services, such as those for Biki on O'ahu and HIBIKE in Hawaii County.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

³ *The Costs of the Vehicle Economy in Hawai'i*, <https://ulupono.com/news-listing/report-examines-hawaii-s-21-8-billion-vehicle-economy/>.

⁴ Presentation at Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission Meeting, April 6, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VqwhX8RJ_IQ

⁵ https://dhrd.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Workforce_Profile_063020061.pdf

⁶ <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwahop23023/ch2.htm>

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HAWAI'I APPLESEED
CENTER FOR LAW & ECONOMIC JUSTICE

**Testimony for Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SB2894 - Relating to Transportation
Senate Committee on Transportation, Culture and the Arts (TCA) and the
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology (LBT)
February 14th, 2024**

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs, and members of the TCA and LBT committees,
Mahalo for the opportunity to express **STRONG SUPPORT for SB2894** which requires the Department of Transportation to establish a State Employee Commuter Benefits Program that provides free or subsidized public transit to State employees. We are also providing recommendations to improve the bill.

This testimony is being submitted on behalf of the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice. Our organization works to build a Hawai'i where everyone has genuine opportunities to achieve economic security and fulfill their potential. Affordable, accessible, and safe transportation is crucial for fostering economic equality as it enables individuals of all backgrounds to access employment opportunities, education, and essential services.

Hawai'i Appleseed is advocating for SB2894 as free/reduced transit for government workers has been found to:

- 1. Reduce household transportation costs.** SB2894 would greatly reduce transportation costs for the State employees who currently rely on public transit to travel to/from work. Currently, transit passes for riders on O'ahu are \$3.00 for a single fare, \$7.50 for a day pass, or \$80 for a monthly pass, which amounts to \$960 a year. These costs may discourage families and individuals who own a personal vehicle (or a different mobility option, such as a Biki membership) from also purchasing a transit pass for commuting purposes. Conversely, free/reduced transit costs could entice state employees to substitute public transit for personal vehicle use, which will allow them to reduce spending on parking, gas, and vehicle maintenance. This is important as owning a personal vehicle in Hawai'i costs about \$8,100 per year.¹ Notably, Hawai'i households own an average of two cars per household, which means vehicle ownership costs families \$16,200 per year, representing about 20 percent of pre-tax median household income.² By decreasing an employee's transportation costs, they can reallocate resources towards other essential needs such as housing, education, and healthcare.

¹ Yerton, Steward. (2020). *Why It Costs So Much To Own A Car In Hawaii*. Honolulu Civil Beat. Available at: <https://www.civilbeat.org/2022/03/why-it-costs-so-much-to-own-a-car-in-hawaii/>.

² Steward (2020)

2. **Increased Transit Usage.** For the State to meet its climate and energy goals, emissions from the ground transportation sector must be reduced. According to the State Climate Commission Report, *Drivers of VMT and Priority Reduction Strategies in Hawai'i*, approximately 30% of all trips taken are under 1 mile, 60% of all trips are under 3 miles, and 70% of all trips are under 5 miles.³ There is a tremendous opportunity to support individuals to shift from using a personal vehicle to using transit for short trips, by providing greater financial incentives. Studies published by the Transit Cooperative Research Program show that going fare free typically increases a transit system's ridership by 25% to 50%.⁴ Historically, this has also shown to be true on O'ahu. In the 1970s, Honolulu instituted a free fare program for all senior citizens over the age of 65. Less than three years later, the bus system was averaging nearly 350,000 senior trips per month, an increase of 88%.⁵ However, as transit fares have been gradually increasing, former Department of Transportation Services Director Wes Frysztacki noted, "for every 10% increase in fare, TheBus generally sees a 3% decline in ridership."⁶
3. **Increased transportation efficiency and public spending.** Investing in public transit infrastructure and subsidizing fares for employees may require initial financial resources, but the long-term benefits far outweigh the costs. By encouraging the use of public transit, the state can reduce the need for expensive road maintenance, alleviate traffic congestion, and improve overall transportation efficiency.
4. **Decrease government vacancy rates.** Currently 25% of all civil service positions in Hawai'i are vacant. Government vacancies have been a growing challenge across the U.S. and some localities have been responding by providing transit benefits to retain existing employees and attract new staff. For example, in 2022, Philadelphia required all large employers (with 50 or more employees) to cover employees' cost of taking mass transit to and from work. In September 2023, that program was expanded to offer free bus passes to all of its nearly 30,000 city employees.

In alignment with the testimony provided by the O'ahu MPO, Hawai'i Appleseed would also like to offer the following recommendations to further improve the bill:

- **Add "bikeshare" and "other micro-mobility devices" to Page 3, Line 3.** Commuting via bikeshare provides many benefits, in addition to those a person can get via commuting with their own bike. In addition to the environmental and health benefits, commuting via bikeshare may also be the most convenient option for some State employees, as one does not need to worry about where to park their bike or the maintenance of their bike. Adding "other micromobility devices"

³ Smart Growth America and the State Smart Transportation Initiative. (2021). *Drivers of VMT and Priority Reduction Strategies in Hawai'i*. Available at:

https://climate.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/USCA_Hawaii_VMT_strategies_Feb22.pdf.

⁴ Volinski J. (2012). *Implementation and outcomes of fare-free transit systems*. Transit Cooperative Research Program. TCRP Synthesis 101. Available at: <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/22753/chapter/1#ii>.

⁵ U.S. Department of Transportation. (1974). *The Effects of Fare Reduction on Public Transit Ridership*. Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_x7JpVGmcb3SZ1LGkiAoZ0yK9Wb5n8av/view.

⁶ Honore, Marcel. *Honolulu Traffic Is Terrible. So Why Aren't More People Riding TheBus?* Honolulu Civil Beat. Available at:

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2019/11/honolulu-traffic-is-terrible-so-why-arent-more-people-riding-thebus/>.

provides flexibility for how State employees may want to commute while also providing them the same benefits for choosing cleaner and more efficient modes of transportation. Micromobility devices may include scooters (electric or not), skateboards, etc.

- **Define micro-mobility devices on Page 3, Line 15.** The definition used in 2024 Legislative Session’s SB 3021 is as follows for electric micromobility device, “Electric micro-mobility device means any ground transportation device such as a standing scooter, skateboard, board riding on a single or double wheels, or similar device which is powered either exclusively by electricity from a battery charged from an external source, or by electricity from a battery charged from an external source in addition to human power, which is designed to transport a single person, with a range exceeding not less than twelve miles and maximum speed of twenty-eight miles per hour, on which a person may reasonably commute to and from regular destinations.” We would recommend revising the language to be inclusive of those micromobility devices that are 100% human powered and adding the following language:

“~~Electric~~ Micro-mobility device means any ground transportation device such as a standing scooter, skateboard, board riding on a single or double wheels, or similar device which is powered ~~either exclusively~~ by electricity from a battery charged from an external source, or by electricity from a battery charged from an external source in addition to human power, or exclusively by human power, which is designed to transport a single person, with a range exceeding not less than twelve miles and maximum speed of twenty-eight miles per hour, on which a person may reasonably commute to and from regular destinations.”

In short, providing free/reduced transit options for state workers, as SB2894 would do, is crucial to ensuring our residents have access to safe and affordable mobility options. This will help reduce individuals and families’ transportation costs and also advance the state’s climate and energy goals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Abbey Seitz

Abbey Seitz

Hawai‘i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

Director of Transportation Equity

SB-2894

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 1:03:01 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/14/2024 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bronson Teixeira	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I vote in support of this bill because I believe it would help with traffic congestion on state/county roadways.

SB-2894

Submitted on: 2/10/2024 3:54:16 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/14/2024 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael EKM Olderr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. This would encourage the use of public transportation, be better for the environment because there would be less cars on the road, and would put a small dent in traffic as there would be less people driving. It's common sense so don't oppose it.

Testimony of Kiana Otsuka in Support with Recommendations

Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

Committee on Labor and Technology

February 14, 2024 at 3:05PM

Conference Room 224

SB 2894

Relating to Transportation

Dear Chairs Lee and Aquino, Vice Chairs Inouye and Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am a Transportation Planner whose expertise is in walk, roll, bike, and transit. I am writing in strong **support of SB 2894 and offer recommendations to improve the bill**, which would require the Department of Transportation to establish a State Employee Commuter Benefits Program that provides free or subsidized public transit to state employees. I wanted to share more on this topic, based on what I learned when I attended the Association for Commuter Transportation Conference last year to support his bill.

Establishing a State Employee Commuter Benefits Program that provides free or subsidized public transit to state employees is a key transportation demand management strategy (TDM). TDM is the use of strategies to inform and encourage travelers to maximize the efficiency of a transportation system leading to improved mobility, reduced congestion, and lower vehicle emissions. TDM makes better use of the transportation infrastructure we already have in place. TDM programs provide all people with real options that enable them to travel from their location to destination in an affordable, efficient, and sustainable way.

TDM programs have been successfully and cost-effectively reducing vehicle trips since the early 1970s. An important study in 2020 showed that local TDM programs are a crucial strategy for meeting US climate targets.¹ In other words, just electrifying personal cars, or making them more fuel efficient, does not go far enough in reducing carbon emissions from the ground transportation sector. In addition to low- and no-carbon vehicles, Hawaii needs low-carbon travel alternatives to single occupancy trips.

Some examples of effective TDM strategies include improving commuter benefits programs, cash incentives and gamification, improved public transit and private shuttles, additional incentives for vanpooling and carpooling, improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, better parking management, remote work, trip planning and ride matching, and improvements in land-use planning, zoning, and ordinances.

I would like to make the following recommendations to further improve the bill:

1. Add "bikeshare" and "other micro-mobility devices" to Page 3, Line 3

Commuting via bikeshare provides many benefits, in addition to those a person can get via commuting with their own bike. In addition to the environmental and health benefits, commuting via bikeshare can be the most convenient option for State employees, as one does not need to worry about where to park their bike or the maintenance of their bike.

Adding "other micromobility devices" provides flexibility for how State employees may want to commute while also providing them the same benefits for choosing cleaner and more efficient modes of transportation. Micromobility devices may include scooters (electric or not), skateboards, etc.

As a State Employee, I am eligible for the following pre-tax transportation benefits: parking space for \$35 or a transit pass for \$80. The existing benefits do not encourage me to use more sustainable modes of transportation, as it heavily subsidizes driving. I am excited to see this bill more equitably distribute transportation benefits for State employees choosing more sustainable means of transportation or those who have little to no choice about how they get around.

¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41558-020-00921-7>

I would be ecstatic if the State legislature would consider additional TDM strategies to support mode shift of State employees, such as cash incentives and gamification, improved public transit and private shuttles, additional incentives for vanpooling and carpooling, improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, better parking management, remote work, trip planning and ride matching, and improvements in land-use planning, zoning, and ordinances to help address cost of living and equity concerns, vacancy rates for State Government jobs, and for us to meet our climate and energy goals.

The Association for Commuter Transportation also recommends the following things States can do²:

1. Empower and dedicate staff to lead, implement, and coordinate employer, institutional, and local land-use TDM programs.
2. Integrate TDM staff into agency operations and culture as part of coordinated efforts to achieve decarbonization and related climate goals. Collaborate to establish clear metrics for decarbonization, congestion management, and system efficiency in evaluating TDM programs.
3. Prioritize the use of federal funding programs to develop and support the implementation of TDM strategies.
4. Develop dedicated long-term funding sources to support TDM programs.
5. Ensure NGOs already implementing TDM strategies, including transportation management associations and commuter service agencies, receive the funding and support they need to accomplish their goals and mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

Mahalo,

Kiana Otsuka

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SB-2894

Submitted on: 2/12/2024 8:36:06 PM

Testimony for TCA on 2/14/2024 3:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support ways to reduce automobile use and increase use of public transportation. Incentivizing state employees to use public transportation makes a ton of sense. It will reduce transportation costs for employees and potentially take a lot of cars off the road. Please pass SB2894.