

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES  
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE 'ŌHUA  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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TESTIMONY OF J. ROGER MORTON  
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS  
AND  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
**Thursday, March 13, 2025, 3:00 PM**  
**Conference RM 224 and Via Videoconference**

TO: Sen. Chris Lee, Chair, Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts  
Sen. Glenn Wakai, Chair, Sen. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

RE: TESTIMONY WITH COMMENTS ON HOUSE BILL 229, HD1, RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

The Department of Transportation Services (DTS), City and County of Honolulu (City), provides the following comments on House Bill 229, HD1, relating to transportation.

DTS supports in concept the bill's intent to promote safer roadways and minimize collision risks involving large vehicles; however, DTS has concerns that the bill is too broadly drafted and may unintentionally impact and impede many City functions including City bus operations. In particular, DTS provides the following comments on the bill as drafted:

1. Forcing a speed limit rule that is "5 miles less than posted," which will not be readily evident to drivers observing the posted speed limit signage, but only in the codified statutes, may violate Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rules regarding regulatory signage and; therefore, make the knowledge incumbent on each licensed driver to know the actual speed limit based on the vehicles they drive.
2. The absence of posted signs that reflect the explicit speed limit for a given stretch of roadway, and requiring that enforcement be based on a speed adjustment subject to the type of vehicle driven, may be problematic for the Honolulu Police Department and impair the enforceability of the law.
3. The mixing of vehicles with different speed restrictions in travel lanes could be problematic. For example, although public buses are exempt under the proposed law, if the large vehicles under speed restrictions are utilizing the same lanes as public buses, then the public buses will be impacted in any case. Furthermore, since the affected large vehicles are being required to travel at a speed that is 5 miles per hour slower than the posted speed limit, it

Testimony with Comments on H.B. No. 229, HD1  
March 13, 2025

would appear prudent to require that such vehicles travel in the slower, or right, lane except when turning or exiting the roadway.

4. The definition of "public bus" requires greater definition and clarification. DTS has considered contracting services with private motorcoach operators, such as for example Roberts Hawai'i, Polynesian Adventure Tours, or other similar operators, who utilize three-axle buses over 10,000 pounds. Would they, as a contracted operator of the City, be included in the "public bus" exception?

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony with comments.

**DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**  
**KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA PĀKA A ME NĀ HANA HO'ONANEA**  
**CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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EDWARD "TED" HAYDEN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O

March 12, 2025

The Honorable Chris Lee, Chair  
The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair  
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs  
State Senate  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chairs Lee and Wakai, Vice Chairs Inouye and Chang, and Members of the Committees:  
Subject: HB229 HD1 – Relating to Transportation

The Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) of the City and County of Honolulu (City), offers the following comments on House Bill (HB) 229, HD1 relating to transportation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **OPPOSITION** of HB 229, HD1. DPR cannot support the measure which places restriction to vehicles weighing more than 10,000 pounds. The majority of the department's maintenance vehicles and garbage trucks exceeds 10,000 pounds. Therefore, the proposed legislation will require longer vehicle traveling time due to the reduction in speed and directly affect the daily operations and maintenance of city parks, especially for rural areas between Kāne'ohe and Hale'iwa. The department would not be able to maintain the frequency in the number of parks services within a day due to increased travel time between city parks.

We humbly request for the deference of HB 229, HD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in **OPPOSITION** of the measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laura H. Thielen", is written over a horizontal line.

Laura H. Thielen, Director  
Department of Parks and Recreation



**Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization**

**Senate Committee on Transportation and Culture and the Arts &  
Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs**

**03/13/2025 3:00 PM  
CR 224 & Videoconference**

**HB 229 HD1  
Relating to Transportation**

Dear Chairs Lee and Wakai, Vice Chair Inouye and Chang, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports HB 229 HD1**, which establishes a statewide speed restriction for motor vehicles with three or more axles or motor vehicles weighing more than ten thousand pounds, except under certain circumstances, in a county with a population of five hundred thousand or more. HB229 HD1 will help strengthen ACT 238, enacted in 2023, by making language clear and strengthening enforcement measures.

This bill will help us achieve the goal of reducing traffic related deaths and serious injuries to zero by 2045. In 2024, the State of Hawaii Department of Transportation conducted an annual [behavioral study](#), and nearly one-quarter of respondents admitted exceeding the speed limit by more than 20 miles per hour, and over half exceeded the speed limit by 10-20 miles per hour in the last six months.

Large vehicles are more likely to cause deadly impacts due to both their mass and the way their height affects crash dynamics. The USDOT NHSTA indicates that in 2021, 71% of large trucks involved in fatal crashes nationally were heavy trucks (e.g. Trucks with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) over 10,000 pounds); there was also a 50.5% increase in fatalities involving large trucks nationwide from 2012 to 2022. While vehicle weight is a key factor in crash severity, height is just as critical—taller vehicles with high front ends reduce visibility and increase the likelihood of severe or fatal injuries, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Addressing these factors together is essential to improving roadway safety, and HB229 is an important step in that direction.

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), which encourages and promotes a safe, efficient, and resilient transportation system that serves the mobility needs of all people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.