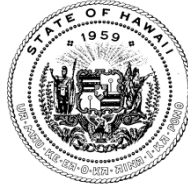


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
CURT T. OTAGURO
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

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

Tuesday, February 11, 2025
9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 430 & Videoconference

H.B. 537
RELATING TO TWO-WHEELED MOTORIZED VEHICLES

House Committee on Transportation

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports H.B. 537**, which requires all operators and passengers of two-wheeled motorized vehicles to wear safety helmets with securely fastened chin straps while operating two-wheeled motorized vehicles on highways, streets, roadways, or any other public property in the State. Defines "two-wheeled motorized vehicles."

According to Hawaii Department of Transportation crash data over the past two years (2023-2024) there were 54 crashes resulting in a fatality within the parameters of the definition of this measure, "operators of two-wheeled motorized vehicles." Of the 54 crashes resulting in a fatality, 30 were reported as not wearing a helmet at the time of the crash. During this same time, one of the fatalities involved an electric bike, and that individual was not wearing a helmet at the time of the crash.

According to the Hurt Study, the use of the safety helmet is the single critical factor in the prevention or reduction of head injury. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) has estimated that motorcycle helmets reduce fatalities by 37 percent using data from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (NHTSA, 2013). H.B. 537 also complements H.B. 968 H.D.1, which also addresses helmets for e-bikes and other micro mobility devices.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

February 10, 2025

Chair Darius Kila
House Committee on Transportation
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 442
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: HB 537 (Olds) – Helmet Requirements
Position: Support

Dear Chairperson Kila,

AAA Hawaii supports HB 537 introduced by House Representative Olds, requiring all operators and passengers of two-wheeled motorized vehicles to wear safety helmets. Current law in this state only requires helmet use in most cases for minors, but we know age-based helmet laws are impossible to enforce. We believe HB 537 can be both effective and enforced to reduce rates of painful injuries and deaths.

Bodies tossed from moving vehicles at high speeds without protective head gear (including on motorcycles, motor scooters, mopeds, and more) could be just as dangerous as a pedestrian hit by a moving vehicle. These vehicles are less protected than passenger vehicles and carry greater risks for serious injuries and fatalities. On a per mile basis, for instance, motorcyclists are almost 24 times more likely to die in collisions than passenger vehicle occupants.ⁱ Statewide highway safety data clearly shows motorcycles, motor scooters and mopeds users represent a disproportionate share of fatalities. Collisions involving two-wheeled vehicles in this state account for approximately 3% of vehicle registrations but 35% of all traffic fatalities.ⁱⁱ

AAA agree with national and state public health organizations that helmets are the most effective motorcycle safety measure shown to save lives in crashes, and the universal helmet law (one that covers all operators and passengers) is the best way to ensure helmet use. For instance, motorcycle helmets reduce the risk of death by 37% for riders and head injury by 69%.ⁱⁱⁱ Similarly, e-bicyclists without helmets are almost twice as likely to suffer head injuries after a serious collisions compared to their helmeted counterparts.^{iv}

Each year there are thousands of preventable deaths and serious injuries among motorcyclists, moped, electric bicycles and electric scooter users involved in crashes because helmet use rates are low. In Hawaii, helmet use among moped riders was around 16% and 59% for motorcyclists^v. While these levels are mostly consistent for states with no or partial helmet laws, states with universal helmet laws had compliance rates over 86% for motorcycles.^{vi}

AAA Hawaii was founded in 1915 in Honolulu and is a leader in motorist services and a strong advocate for traffic safety. With over 170,000 members in Hawaii and 60 million nationwide, service to and the safety of our members, other motorists, and all road users is our founding and continuing

1130 N. Nimitz Highway, Suite A170, Honolulu, HI 96817

Auto Club Enterprises provides service to more than 14 million members



purpose. Helmets alone cannot prevent traffic safety collisions, but they can serve as the last line of defense for motorcycle, motor scooter, e-bicycle, and moped operators in preventing serious trauma. From seat belts to helmets, all road users need to stay ready for the dangers around them. We share Representative Old's effort to road safety and appreciate his effort on this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marianne Kim
Senior Public Policy Specialist
Kim.Marianne@ace.aaa.com

ⁱ National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2023). Traffic Safety Facts: 2021 Data (DOT HS 813 466).

ⁱⁱ Hawaii Department of Transportation. (2024) Hawaii Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2025-2029

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Archives). [Motorcycle Injury Prevention](#)

^{iv} Fernandez AM, Li KD, Patel HV, et al. Electric Bicycle Injuries and Hospitalizations. JAMA Surg. 2024;159(5):586–588. doi:10.1001/jamasurg.2023.7860

^v Hawaii Department of Transportation. (2018). Hawaii 2018 Highway Safety Plan. State of Hawaii

^{vi} National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Countermeasures That Work: [Universal Motorcycle Helmet Use Laws](#).



ADVOCATES
FOR HIGHWAY
& AUTO SAFETY

February 10, 2024

The Honorable Darius K. Kila, Chair
The Honorable Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
House Committee on Transportation
Hawaii State Legislature
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kila and Vice Chair Grandinetti:

Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety (Advocates), an alliance of consumer, safety, medical, public health and law enforcement groups and insurance companies working together to pass highway and auto safety laws that prevent crashes, save lives, reduce injuries, and contain costs, supports House Bill (HB) 537, which would require all operators and passengers of two-wheeled motorized vehicles to utilize the lifesaving protection of helmets.

Motorcycles are the most hazardous form of motor vehicle transportation, and fatalities are rising. In 2022, 6,218 motorcyclists were killed in the U.S., the highest number of fatalities on record.ⁱ An additional 82,687 motorcyclists were injured in the same year.ⁱⁱ Motorcycle riders are nearly 28 times more likely to die in a crash than passenger vehicle occupants.ⁱⁱⁱ In 2022, 33 motorcyclists lost their lives in Hawaii, and 68 percent were not wearing a helmet when helmet use was known.^{iv} Hawaii motorcyclist fatalities have increased 65 percent since the pre-pandemic 2019 level.^v

In addition to the physical and emotional burden, traffic crashes exact a financial toll. In addition, Hawaii incurred \$580 million in economic harm due to motor vehicle crashes according to a 2019 analysis.^{vi} Updating for inflation only this cost would be \$711 million in 2024 dollars.^{vii} Annually, motorcycle rider crashes cost nearly \$17 billion in economic impacts and \$107 billion in societal harm as measured by comprehensive costs based on 2019 data.^{viii} Accounting for inflation alone, in 2024, this would equate to over \$21 billion in economic impacts, and over \$131 billion in societal harm.^{ix} Serious injuries and fatalities accounted for 83 percent of total comprehensive costs of motorcyclist crashes, compared to 60 percent of the total comprehensive costs of all motor vehicle crashes.^x

Conversely, in 2019, motorcycle helmet use prevented \$21.2 billion in societal harm costs, but another \$9.4 billion could have been prevented if all motorcycle riders had worn helmets.^{xi} Updating for inflation only, in 2024 this would equate to \$26 billion in societal harm prevented and over \$11.5 billion if all riders had worn helmets.^{xii} Helmets reduce the cost of medical treatment, length of hospital stay and probability of long-term disability for motorcyclists injured in a crash.^{xiii} In states with an all-rider helmet law, use of a helmet resulted in economic costs saved to society of \$725 per registered motorcycle, compared with \$198 per registered motorcycle in states without such a law.^{xiv}

We recommend that every state has an all-rider motorcycle helmet law because this is a verified lifesaver. According to a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), laws requiring all motorcyclists to wear helmets are the only strategy proven to be effective in reducing motorcyclist fatalities.^{xv} Helmets are vital as they reduce the risk of head injury by 69 percent and risk of death by 42 percent.^{xvi} Federal data show that in states with all-rider helmet use laws, use of helmets compliant with federal standards is 83 percent, compared to just 66 percent in states without such a law.^{xvii} In 2022, there were 7.7 times as many unhelmeted fatalities (1,986 fatalities) in states without a universal helmet use law compared to states with a universal helmet law (258 fatalities).^{xviii} These states were similar in total populations.^{xix} A recent analysis from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) calculated that between 1976 and 2022, over 22,000 additional lives could have been saved if all states had enacted all-rider motorcycle helmet laws.^{xx}

With motorcyclist fatalities at record levels, we urge you to advance HB 537. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President

-
- i Traffic Safety Facts: 2022 Data, Motorcycles, National Highway and Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), July 2024 (Revised), DOT HS 813 589, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813589>.
- ii Ibid.
- iii Traffic Safety Facts. 2020 Data: Motorcycles, NHTSA, May 2022, DOT HS 813 306.
- iv State Traffic Safety Information for Hawaii (2022), NHTSA, available at <https://cdan.dot.gov/stsi.htm>.
- v Ibid.
- vi The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
- vii CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, January 2019 to January 2024 dollars, available [here](#).
- viii The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019 (Revised), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), February 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
- ix CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, January 2019 to January 2024 dollars, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.
- x The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019 (Revised), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), February 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403>.
- xi Ibid.
- xii CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, January 2019 to January 2024 dollars, available at <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl>.
- xiii Costs of Injuries Resulting from Motorcycle Crashes: A Literature Review, NHTSA, November 2002, DOT HS 809 242.
- xiv Helmet use Among Motorcyclists Who Died in Crashes and Economic Cost Savings Associated with State Motorcycle Helmet Laws – United States, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012.
- xv Motorcycle Safety: Increasing Federal Funding Flexibility and Identifying Research Priorities Would Help Support States’ Safety Efforts, U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), November 2012, available at: <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-13-42>.
- xvi Liu BC, Ivers R, Norton R, Boufous S, Blows S, and Lo SK, “Helmets for Preventing Injury in Motorcycle Riders (Review),” The Cochrane Library, 2009.
- xvii Traffic Safety Facts, Research Note: Motorcycle Helmet Use in 2023 – Overall Results, NHTSA, Sept. 2024, DOT HS 813 634, available at <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813634>.
- xviii Traffic Safety Facts 2021 Data: Motorcycles, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration NHTSA, June 2023, DOT HS 813 466, available at: <https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813466>; 2020 Population and Housing State Data, US Census Bureau, August 2021, available at <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/2020-population-and-housing-state-data.html>.
- xix 2020 Population and Housing State Data, US Census Bureau, available at <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/2020-population-and-housing-state-data.html>.
- xx The human cost of allowing unhelmeted motorcycling in the United States, Oct. 2024, IIHS, available at: <https://www.iihs.org/topics/bibliography/ref/2317>.

HB-537

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:35:35 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/11/2025 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victor K. Ramos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE this bill. Keep it optional.