

ACT 177

S.B. NO. 2943

A Bill for an Act Relating to Workforce Development.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Hawaii:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii is the most isolated population center in the world, situated approximately two thousand four hundred miles from the closest landmass, the mainland United States. Given this geographical isolation, efficient transportation is critical for the survival of the State's population and tourism industry. Commercial driver's license holders play a pivotal role in moving shipments from docks and airports to shelves, as storage space is limited within the State.

The legislature further finds that Hawaii grapples with a shortage of commercial drivers, a challenge mirrored on the continental United States. The nationwide deficit of truck drivers is more than eighty thousand. If current trends persist, the deficit is projected to double to one hundred sixty thousand by 2030.

The legislature also finds that this scarcity in the number of commercial drivers directly impacts the State's education system, for which more than two hundred additional commercial drivers are required to fully cover school bus routes statewide, forcing some students to ride public transit. To address this growing crisis, it is imperative to develop and implement a strategic plan that encourages employment in the commercial driver's field to ensure the State's economic and social well-being.

Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to create a working group within the department of transportation to address the State's current and future needs for commercial driver's license holders.

SECTION 2. (a) There is established a commercial drivers workforce working group within the department of transportation. The working group shall:

- (1) Engage the public and private sectors to increase awareness of the ground transportation industry and the industry's workforce needs; and
 - (2) Collaborate with key stakeholders to identify and develop possible career paths for qualified commercial drivers, prioritizing filling vacancies within the department of education, with the ultimate goal of filling vacancies within the private and public sectors.
- (b) The working group shall consist of the following members:
- (1) The director of transportation, or the director's designee, who shall serve as the co-chair of the working group;
 - (2) One member from the department of education workforce development branch, who shall serve as the co-chair of the working group;

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- (3) A campus coordinator from the office of workforce development at the university of Hawaii community colleges who is in charge of a workforce development program that includes commercial driver's license training;
 - (4) One member from the department of labor and industrial relations workforce development council;
 - (5) One member from each county's commercial driver's licensing office; and
 - (6) One member from each county's workforce development board.
- (c) The director of transportation shall invite representatives from the following organizations to serve as members of the working group:
- (1) Two members representing the Hawaii Transportation Association;
 - (2) One member representing the labor union representing commercial driver's license holders; and
 - (3) One member representing a local non-profit organization currently providing commercial driver's license training.
- (d) The working group shall submit a report of its findings and recommendations to address the shortage of commercial drivers in the State, including any proposed legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the regular session of 2025.
- (e) The working group shall cease to exist on June 30, 2025.

SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

(Approved July 2, 2024.)