



*The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i*

**Testimony to the Thirty-Third State Legislature, 2025 Session**

**House Committee on Transportation**

Representative Darius K. Kila, Chair

Representative Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 13, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Conference Room 430

By:

Michelle D. Acosta

Deputy Chief Court Administrator

District Court of the First Circuit

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

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**Bill No. and Title:** House Bill No. 1231, Relating to Traffic Safety

**Purpose:** Requires the State to prioritize the installation of photo red light imaging detector systems in school zones if the State establishes a photo red light imaging detector system. Requires proceeds of fines collected for disregarding a steady red signal pursuant to a photo red light imaging detector system installed in a school zone to be deposited into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund.

**Judiciary's Position:**

The Judiciary takes no position on the merits of the bill and submits the following concerns for the Legislatures consideration.

House Bill No. 1231 would expand the photo red light imaging detectors to school zones, which includes every street and all public property in the vicinity of a school as designated by the department of transportation. The Judiciary has concerns regarding the volume of citations that may be generated from the expansion of the photo red light imaging detector system. Based on available data the 10 existing red light photo detection systems issued an average 1,991 citations per month in 2024.



These citations must be processed by the district courts. The high volume would likely overwhelm current court resources. The third-party vendor selected by the Department of Transportation would provide electronic copies of traffic citations to the district courts throughout the state. However, the Judiciary's Information Management System (JIMS) is not currently equipped to pull data from the law enforcement citations and transfer the data into court records. Instead, all of the information in the citations (name, address, driver's license number, location of the offense, vehicle make and model, vehicle license plate, etc.) is manually entered by court staff into JIMS, similar to the way that handwritten notes on a receipt need to be manually entered into a billing system in order to create an invoice. Once that information is manually entered by court staff, court staff then processes requests for hearings and written statements from motorists contesting the citations or explaining mitigating circumstances, schedules court dates, and prepares minutes from court hearings. A dramatic increase in traffic citations would likely overwhelm current court resources, potentially to the detriment of other types of cases heard by District Court.

The Judiciary's Information Technology Systems Department (ITSD) is looking for technological solutions to efficiently receive and process the high volume of electronic citations. This process of researching and procuring the most appropriate solution will require time and possibly an appropriation.

The Judiciary requests that any expansion of the red light and/or speed camera system take into consideration the impact on the district courts statewide and allow adequate time for the courts to work with the Department of Transportation prior to expanding the traffic enforcement camera systems. The Judiciary requests that the Legislature consider similar language as House Bill No. 235, which requires the Department of Transportation to seek public input from the community in selecting locations for expansion and provide a report to the legislature concerning its implementation progress. The Judiciary further requests that the Department of Transportation include the Judiciary's input in its expansion plans.

The Judiciary would request an effective date of January 1, 2027. This date will allow the Judiciary to assess whether an appropriation will be needed to implement House Bill No. 1231.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

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  
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February 13, 2025  
10:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Room 329

**H.B. 1231**  
**RELATING TO TRAFFIC SAFETY**

House Committee on Transportation

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The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports the intent of H.B. 1231**, which requires the State to prioritize the installation of photo red light imaging detector systems in school zones if the State establishes a photo red light imaging detector system. Requires proceeds of fines collected for disregarding a steady red signal pursuant to a photo red light imaging detector system installed in a school zone to be deposited into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund.

The HDOT plans to begin expanding the effective photo red light imaging detector systems and implementing the automated speed enforcement systems later this year. The same criteria, that was used to pick the pilot locations, will be used to select future locations. The criteria included number of crashes caused by drivers who disregarded the traffic signal, volume of traffic as well as traffic citations for disregarding the signal.

While we support the intent of this bill to install the automated photo enforcement program in school zones, the HDOT stresses the importance of using the same selection criteria statewide to ensure consistency within the program. This consistency is vital as the data will need to justify the selection of the location will be examined in court.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
Thursday, February 13, 2025 – 10:00am

**Hawai'i Bicycling League STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB 1231, Relating to Transportation**

Aloha Chair Kila, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Committee Members,

My name is Eduardo Hernandez, and I am the Advocacy Director of the Hawai'i Bicycling League (HBL). We are a non-profit organization founded in 1975 with the mission of enabling more people to ride bicycles for health, recreation, and transportation. We strive to create communities across our islands that have safe, accessible, and inclusive environments for people to bike, walk, and roll.

**Hawai'i Bicycling League strongly supports HB 1231**, which requires the State to prioritize the installation of photo red light imaging detector systems in school zones if the State establishes a photo red light imaging detector system. It also requires proceeds of fines collected for disregarding a steady red signal pursuant to a photo red light imaging detector system installed in a school zone to be deposited into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund.

**Red Light Cameras**

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, about 340 communities throughout the United States have red light cameras, and 278 have speed cameras. Case studies have shown the efficacy of traffic cameras. New York City was the first jurisdiction to implement a red light camera program in 1992.

In October 2024, the state of New York announced it was expanding its red light camera programs, citing a 73% drop in red light running and related crashes where they were installed. Following its own example, New York City in 2013 started adding speed cameras to school zones and realized immediate results. In those school zones, speeding fell by 63%, crashes by 15%, and fatalities by 55%. The cameras issued an average of 104 speed violations per day in their first month, a figure that fell to 51 per day by the end of their first year in service. The vast majority of drivers didn't receive a second fine after their first offense—signaling a change in driver habits.

**Safe Routes to School**

The SRTS program encourages keiki to walk, bike, and roll to school by supporting pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects within a one-mile radius of public schools. Despite the importance of this program, it is severely underfunded. Moreover, the Navahine agreement mandates that HDOT complete its multimodal network within 5 years. This undertaking will require a significant investment, as the Hawai'i Climate Commission identified nearly \$1 billion in high-priority pedestrian, bicycle, and multimodal projects across the state that are currently unfunded. With a

majority of these projects located near schools, it's critical that the legislature enhance the SRTS program, to improve safety for everyone who walks, bikes or rolls near a school.

In summary, with the state's pressing cost of living challenges, including transportation costs, as well as our climate and energy crises, it is vital that the state prioritize funding to improve the safety of people walking, rolling, biking, and using transit, as well as make those choices more desirable by reducing red light infractions. HB 1231 is an important step to improve pedestrian safety in Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Ride Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eduardo Hernandez', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Eduardo Hernandez**  
Advocacy Director



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
Thursday, February 13, 2025 — 10:00 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports HB 1231, Relating to Traffic Safety.**

Dear Chair Kila and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mariah Yoshizu, and I am the Government Affairs Associate 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 HB 1231**, which requires the State to prioritize the installation of photo red light imaging detector systems in school zones if the State establishes a photo red light imaging detector system; and requires proceeds of fines collected for disregarding a steady red signal pursuant to a photo red light imaging detector system installed in a school zone to be deposited into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund.

Although current transportation planning and decision-making have provided important safe routes to school projects and have added facilities through Complete Streets approaches, many schools remain less accessible for keiki walking or rolling to school. The lack of complete, safe and comfortable bike and pedestrian networks puts keiki at risk, especially among growing safety concerns in these areas. An analysis of Hawai'i EMS calls found that pedestrian and bicycling injuries to children are most likely to occur during the hours they are traveling to and from school.<sup>1</sup> Overall, walking and biking in Hawai'i have gotten progressively more dangerous in the last 20 years, and we are now ranked the 12<sup>th</sup> most dangerous state to walk and bike.<sup>2</sup>

Other states have made firm commitments to protect children's school trips. For example, Colorado dedicates more than \$2.5 million per year in both infrastructure and programmatic monies. These projects range from physical infrastructure improvements like new sidewalks, lighting and trails, to softer solutions like walking school buses, maps and trip trackers to encourage healthier active living. The more we can support affordable options for keiki to get to school and protect them when they are walking and rolling, the better off our communities will be.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hiphi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SRTS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

The Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee's January 2025 Annual Report<sup>3</sup> outlines several critical findings regarding school transportation and safe routes to school in Hawai'i. National research shows that these programs can significantly increase walking and biking to school, with participation rising 18-37 percent, while simultaneously reducing pedestrian injuries in school zones by 44-75 percent. The need for these programs is widespread, as approximately 77 percent of Hawai'i residents live within one mile of a school. Furthermore, a preliminary analysis has already identified more than \$800 million in SRTS infrastructure needs across the state.

Furthermore, a preliminary analysis by the Advisory Committee has already identified more than \$800 million in safe routes to school infrastructure needs across the state. The Safe Routes to School Program needs consistent funding to meet growing safety challenges. A sustainable funding source, such as the proposed fee, is critical for projects that protect our communities and students.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Mariah Yoshizu  
Government Affairs Associate

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<sup>3</sup> <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HWY-S-25-2.45019-DOT-Report-for-Act-244-SLH-2023-Safe-Routes-to-School.pdf>



**Testimony in Support for HB1231 - Relating to Transportation**  
**House Committee on Transportation (TRN)**  
**February 13, 2025 at 10AM**

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Dear Chair Kila, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and members of the TRN committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to express **SUPPORT for HB1231**, which would require that priority be given to installing photo red light imaging detector systems in school zones, should the State establish a photo red light imaging detector system. HB1231 would also require proceeds of fines collected for disregarding a steady red signal pursuant to a photo red light imaging detector system installed in a school zone to be deposited into the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program Special Fund.

### **Safe Routes to School Program**

There is an urgent need to improve the safety of vulnerable roadway users in Hawai'i. In 2024 alone, there were 102 traffic fatalities statewide and a staggering 42% of those fatalities involved pedestrians and bicyclists.<sup>1</sup> Between 2015 and 2020, nearly 49% of pedestrian fatalities on O'ahu occurred on state-owned roadways.<sup>2</sup> Pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries are also growing. For example, the average annual number of statewide pedestrian fatalities rose by 26 percent during the 2014–2018 time period, when compared to the 2009–2013 time period.<sup>3</sup>

The SRTS program encourages keiki to walk, bike, and roll to school by supporting pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects within a one-mile radius of public schools. Despite the importance of this program, it is severely underfunded. The current dedicated annual revenue source for the SRTS program are traffic violation surcharges. At the same time the *Navahine* agreement mandates that HDOT complete its multimodal network within 5 years. This undertaking will require a significant investment, as the Hawai'i Climate Commission identified nearly \$1 billion in high-priority pedestrian, bicycle, and multimodal projects across the state that are currently unfunded.<sup>4</sup> With a majority of these projects located near schools, it's critical that the legislature enhance the SRTS program.

### **Red Light Cameras**

The 2023 Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment for Hawai'i noted that 57% of pedestrian crashes happen at intersections. This highlights the need to increase compliance with traffic signals and reduce speeding and at these locations. Automated cameras have been found to significantly reduce speeding

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<sup>1</sup> HDOT, "Traffic Fatalities Up 10% From 2023," December 31, 2024.

<sup>2</sup> CCH-DTS, "O'ahu Vision Zero Action Plan," 2024.

<sup>3</sup> State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation, "State of Hawai'i Traffic Fatalities," 2022.

<sup>4</sup> State of Hawai'i Climate Commission, "Transportation Projects," 2025.

<https://climate.hawaii.gov/grants-to-projects-bridge/transportation-projects/>.

and crash-related injuries, while yielding cost savings.<sup>5</sup> They have been found to reduce racial- and gender-based disparities in traffic stops.<sup>6</sup> However, automated enforcement also pose due-process and privacy concerns.<sup>7</sup> To address these concerns, the Vera Institute of Justice developed a set of recommendations included in their 2021 *Non-Police Responses to Traffic Safety*<sup>8</sup> policy brief. These recommendations are provided below:

- Transferring automated camera operations to non-police agencies.
- Banning the use of facial recognition software.
- Requiring oversight boards to monitor the volume and type of traffic citations these tools generate and how they impact communities.

In summary, it is vital that the state prioritize funding to improve the safety of people walking, rolling, biking, and using transit, as well as make those choices more desirable through investing in pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure. Should the State establish a photo red light imaging detector system, we believe it is important that the revenue collected through this program support the SRTS program.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



Abbey Seitz

Director of Transportation Equity

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

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<sup>5</sup> Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA), "Speed and Red Light Cameras," 2021.

<https://www.ghsa.org/state-laws/issues/speed%20and%20red%20light%20cameras>; Shin, Kangwon, et al., "Evaluation of the Scottsdale Loop 101 Automated Speed Enforcement Demonstration Program, Accident Analysis & Prevention," *Accident Analysis & Prevention* 41, no. 3, 393-403, 2009; and Libby J. Thomas, Raghavan Srinivasan, Lawrence E. Decina et al., "Safety Effects of Automated Speed Enforcement Programs: Critical Review of International Literature," *Transportation Research Record* 2078, no. 1, 117-126, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Sarah Marx Quintanar, "Man vs. Machine: An Investigation of Speeding Ticket Disparities Based on Gender and Race," *Journal of Applied Economics* 20, no. 1, 1-28, 2017. <https://perma.cc/9X3E-6TEX>.

<sup>7</sup> Caroline J. Rodier, Susan Shaheen, and Ellen Cavanaugh, "Automated Speed Enforcement in the U.S.: A Review of the Literature on Benefits and Barriers to Implementation," Paper Submitted to the Transportation Research Board Annual Meeting, July, 2007. <https://perma.cc/VYW7-5PCU>.

<sup>8</sup> Vera Institute of Justice, "Investing in Evidence-Based Alternatives to Policing: Non-Police Responses to Traffic Safety," August, 2021.

<https://vera-institute.files.svdcdn.com/production/downloads/publications/alternatives-to-policing-traffic-enforcement-fact-sheet.pdf>.



## Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

### Committee on Transportation

02/13/25 10:00 AM  
CR 430 & Videoconference

HB 1231  
Relating to Traffic Safety

Dear Chair Kila, Vice Chair Grandinetti, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports HB1231** which requires the State to prioritize the installation of photo red light imaging detector systems in school zones and requires proceeds of fines collected for disregarding a steady red signal pursuant to a photo red light imaging detector system installed in a school zone to be deposited into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund.

Half of the deaths in red light running crashes involve some of our most vulnerable road users, including bicyclists and pedestrians as well as occupants of non-violating vehicles. In the State of Hawaii, traffic deaths increased ten percent between 2023 and 2024. In 2024, the State of Hawaii Department of Transportation conducted an annual behavioral study, where one-fifth of all drivers admitted to driving through crosswalks without checking for pedestrians and one-fifth of drivers admitted to running red lights. Implementing this bill will enhance safety in areas where some of our most vulnerable people, keiki, are walking, biking, and rolling to get to school. Depositing fines collected for running red lights into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund will help to further augment transportation projects and programs focused on getting our keiki to school safely.

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.

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**HB-1231**

Submitted on: 2/11/2025 9:59:31 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chad K Taniguchi	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Red light cameras work to stop red light running and resulting crashes. Best practice in choosing locations for such cameras is to look at locations where crashes and injuries have occurred despite using other safety measures. The reasons for this practice are the high cost of cameras and the desire to use resources where they will do the most good.

Certain School zones may already be relatively safe because of good designs or other traffic safety steps taken. Making school zones safest to promote walking and bicycling to school is an important goal.

**HB-1231**

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 5:12:39 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Edgardo Diaz Vega	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I urge you to vote in support of this proposal which would require red light imaging detectors in school zones. Ensuring that children and their guardians can safely arrive and depart from islands' schools is of critical importance. Drivers who violate traffic laws in school zones present a safety risk for themselves, entire families, and especially the safety of children. The proposal also ensures that proceeds from any violators help create a safer environment around schools by being deposited into the Safe Routes to School Program Special Fund.

**HB-1231**

Submitted on: 2/12/2025 2:16:32 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daniel C. Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Makes sense to prioritize the installation of photo red light imaging detector systems in school zones if the State establishes/expands a photo red light imaging detector system.

The first priority should be schools near busy intersections with traffic lights. There are two such schools in Pearl City.

I strongly support this bill.

Daniel C. Smith

Pearl City

**HB-1231**

Submitted on: 2/13/2025 7:35:08 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/13/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elena Arinaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.