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

## H.B. 1286 RELATING TO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

### House Committee on Transportation

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports H.B. 1286 with comments.** H.B. 1286 prohibits pedestrians from walking along the roadway of an interstate highway, an auxiliary interstate highway, or certain state highways except while conducting authorized first responder duties or highway maintenance duties.

The HDOT supports efforts to improve pedestrian safety, however, as currently written, this bill would restrict pedestrian mobility, especially for those pedestrians who do not have access to a personal motor vehicle and rely on walking and/or transit to access critical destinations. In addition to restricting pedestrian mobility, the HDOT has the following comments:

- Due to existing physical (e.g., topography, available right-of-way, etc.) and resource (e.g., funding) constraints for the State Highway System, it would not be feasible to add a pedestrian facility, such as a sidewalk, along every roadway a pedestrian may need to access.
- Restricting pedestrian access to sidewalks would require the installation of hundreds of signs to inform roadway users of the restriction.
- Because transit stops often do not have a sidewalk in rural areas, this bill would require restructuring of, and likely cause a reduction of, transit routes and stops statewide.
- This bill would also make it illegal for a person to walk along the roadway shoulder if their car were to breakdown.

Because of the above, the HDOT requests that "(3) State highway unless a clearly designated sidewalk is provided on the state highway" be revised to "(3) State highway unless a pedestrian facility is available along the state highway or the posted speed limit is not greater than 25 miles per hour."

Additionally, this subsection appears to supersede Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) §291C-76 Pedestrians on roadways.

(b) Where sidewalks are not provided any pedestrian walking along and upon a highway shall, when practicable, walk only on the left side of the roadway or its shoulder facing traffic which may approach from the opposite direction.

Additional adjustments to HRS may be needed to avoid conflicts.

The HDOT will evaluate areas that are greater than 25 miles per hour to consider lowering the speed limit and/or adding pedestrian facilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
Tuesday, February 11, 2025 — 9:30 a.m.

**Ulupono Initiative offers comments on HB 1286, Relating to Pedestrian 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, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono offers comments on HB 1286**, which prohibits pedestrians from walking along the roadway of an interstate highway, an auxiliary interstate highway, or certain state highways except while conducting authorized first responder duties or highway maintenance duties.

Although we believe the intent of this bill is to help increase pedestrian safety, we have significant concerns about the proposed subsection “(3) state highway unless a clearly designated sidewalk is provided on the state highway.”

The Hawai'i Department of Transportation's "O'ahu State Roads and Highways" webpage documents numerous state highways without sidewalks that serve as crucial community connections.<sup>1</sup> The proposed language would make walking illegal on these vital routes where sidewalks do not exist, effectively making walking illegal as a transportation option for many Hawai'i residents.

Specifically, walking to the recently installed roundabout at Kamehameha Highway and Kahekili Highway on O'ahu would be prohibited, as there is no sidewalk (only a shoulder) approaching that intersection. Another example is in Hanalei on Kaua'i, where there is no sidewalk on Kuhio Highway through parts of town. In both of these places, people walk to access stores, schools, and bus services. They must already choose between walking on the shoulder near vehicle traffic or navigating muddy, overgrown terrain. Rather than

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/home/oahu/oahu-state-roads-and-highways/>



prohibiting walking entirely, we should focus on making these essential routes safer for all users.

HRS 291C-1 defines a “Sidewalk” to mean that portion of a street between the curb lines, or the lateral lines of a roadway, and the adjacent property lines, intended for use of pedestrians. However, this does not appear to cover shoulders such as those used in the communities mentioned above and potentially others. We are unaware of a full inventory of missing sidewalks on highways. Certainly, before enacting legislation that could criminalize walking on state highways without sidewalks, a comprehensive inventory of affected routes should be conducted.

We appreciate the interest in increasing pedestrian safety and welcome the Legislature’s leadership and investment in more sidewalks or walkways on state highways, as it would be one of the strongest commitments towards our most affordable, accessible, and sustainable mode of travel — walking.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Mariah Yoshizu  
Government Affairs Associate

TESTIMONY OF  
**LARRY S VERAY**

TO THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

***IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1286***

**RELATED TO PEDESTRIAN SAFETY**

February 9, 2025

Aloha, Chair Kila, Vice Chair Grandinetti and committee members. I am Larry Veray, Chairman for the Pearl City Neighborhood Board No. 21 and I am submitting this testimony as an individual. Our Pearl City Neighborhood Board has addressed public and specifically pedestrian safety in almost everyone of our board meetings. **I am in STRONG SUPPORT OF HB1286.**

This bill addresses a major problem we all experience everyday as we drive or ride our bus system along our city streets, roads and in particular state highways. Although we have educated our young and senior people to be mindful when walking along our roadways, we still have many people walking on the wrong side of the road when there are no sidewalks. We continue to require education programs and material for the public to remind them that they must face traffic when walking along a roadway. Also, no person should be walking along a state H1/H2/H3 highways.

Regretfully, the biggest violators of people walking on the wrong side of the road are homeless and transients, many with mental problems and those who just will not follow our laws. The public observes no enforcement for the current pedestrian safety laws.

**Please approve HB1286.** Mahalo!

*Larry S. Veray*