



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

February 3, 2025  
10:00 A.M.  
State Capitol, Room 430

**H.B. 486**  
**RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**

House Committee on Transportation

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) is providing comments on **H.B. 486**, relating to transportation. This measure:

- Prohibits the operation of a bicycle equipped with a motor on any sidewalk, highway, street, or roadway, and establishes penalties.
- Prohibits the removal of a speed limiting device from an electric bicycle.
- Requires the Department of Transportation to develop a traffic safety campaign.
- Appropriates funds.

With respect to the intent of this measure to enhance safety on our roadways, DOT respectfully recommends HB958, as it provides a tiered classification of electric bicycles, and a safety framework to encourage responsible operation of electric bicycles.

Data from the DOT reveals that in Hawaii there have been an average of seven bicyclist fatalities from 2022 through 2024, compared to an average of four fatalities involving bicyclists from 2019 through 2021 (22 vs.12). That is nearly two times the amount of bicycle related fatalities over the past three years compared to the three years prior.

The DOT also recognizes that electric bike related fatalities started showing up among our fatal crashes in 2015, Hawaii started seeing approximately one electric bike related fatality each year. This alarming trend demonstrates the need for improved policy to address some of our more vulnerable road users, as well as lay the foundation for safe electric mobility use.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
Tuesday February 4, 2025 – 10:00am

**Hawai'i Bicycling League STRONGLY OPPOSES HB 486, 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 opposes HB 486**, the purpose of which is to prohibit the operation of an electric bicycle on a highway, street, roadway, or any other areas designated for motor vehicles; and prohibit reckless or unsafe operation of an electric bicycle, which is already illegal as part of HRS §291C-142. This bill does not equitably solve road safety issues for vulnerable road users nor recognize that Hawai'i residents need lower-cost and more sustainable transportation options. Moreover, it unfairly stigmatizes electric bicycle operators and favors car drivers, even though the most lethal threat on our roadways is from speeding cars and impaired drivers.

Electric bicycles, electric mopeds, and other low-speed electric mobility devices serve as a way to reduce the costs of living for Hawai'i residents while also working towards the State's climate goals. These devices can reduce the need to own a vehicle, often allowing households to eliminate a vehicle and save upwards of \$10,000 per year. They can also reduce the number of vehicles being used for short trips, therefore reducing parking demand and vehicle traffic.

HBL agrees that there is a need to update our laws and regulations as regards bicycling, roadway use, and emerging technologies including e-mobility devices like e-bicycles. The public deserves safety improvements that are based on data, provide lower cost transportation solutions, and raise awareness that streets and roadways are a shared public resource.

In January, the Honolulu City Council unanimously passed [Bill 52](#) relating to electric bicycles. HBL worked closely with Council Members Dos Santos-Tam and Tulba, as well as serving on the City's Department of Transportation E-Mobility Working Group to hone this legislation. It is based on statewide data and the Working Group's recommendations have been shared with the legislature for your consideration during the 2025 session. HBL encourages you to work from this informed baseline and make improvements that can benefit people across Hawai'i.

In this process, we identified that incomplete and outdated definitions are a problem as regards e-mobility devices; that young people are experiencing higher risks; and that generally more awareness

and education is needed to truly impact safety. Bill 52 prohibits the true danger, that is high-speed and high power electric devices that look like e-bikes.

We recommend members of the House Committee on Transportation focus on:

**Guidelines for the House Committee on Transportation:**

- Update HRS bicycle definitions in traffic code and elsewhere, based on current three tier standards and not outdated U.S. Code § 2085 which was enacted more than 22 years ago and lacks the clarity needed today
- Define out of class vehicles that resemble bicycles and have motors greater than 750 watts and are capable of motorized propulsion at speeds higher than 28 mph should be expressly excluded from bicycle definitions
- Require helmets for individuals under age 18 as a proven safety intervention while operating a bicycle or electric mobility device
- Consider prohibitions on e-bikes for those under 15 to **only class 3** e-bikes and allowing use for class 1 and 2 by all ages, as this is standard across most states
- Define the term “bicycle with motor” in HRS; “bicycle(s) equipped with motor(s) motorized bicycle and bicycle with motor attached” to mean only an electric motor exceeding 750 watts or any combustion engine.” These devices should be expressly prohibited from public street, highway, alley, path, or trail, including a bikeway. However, “bicycle with motor” should not include low-speed class 1, 2, or 3, electric bicycles
- Fold in language related to e-mobility micro devices (HB 958) into HB 435, following similar standards as noted above.
- Fold in language related to electric bicycle mobility rebate (HB 670) into HB 435 following similar standards as noted above.

Please stop further consideration of HB 486. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

Ride Aloha,



**Eduardo Hernandez**  
Advocacy Director

**HB-486**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 11:40:00 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/4/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Manabo Sato	Moped Doctors Inc	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice Chair and all members of the Committee,

My name is Manabo Sato. I am the co founder and Vice President of Moped Doctors Inc a local moped sales and service store in Honolulu for fifteen years. We at Moped Doctors oppose HB486 on the grounds that this bill thought specifically singling out electric bicycles could be applied to gas powered mopeds in the future and cause even more disruption in our already struggling industry. We have endured but with the increasing number of restrictions on low powered personal transportation like mopeds and now certain electric bicycles, this will make it much harder on the businesses, users and everyone else in this state who rely on these methods (e bicycles/ gas mopeds, low powered personal transportation devices ) for everyday life whether school or work. Most of these users are lower income and any penalty /added cost to their method of transport could disrupt their lives unnecessarily .

Please defer this bill or drop it.

Thank you

Manabo Sato

VP Moped Doctors Inc

**HB-486**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:57:55 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/4/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maaza Christos Mekuria	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill, in my observation, is going to shift the crashes from regular lanes to bicycles lanes and mixes two different modes (motorized and Non-Motorized) into the same category and ultimately is not helpful to mobility or safe travel by all users, including non-motorized or motorized Bicycles. First, By prohibiting Motorized Electric bicycles from riding the streets it is forcing these travellers to ride with regular (non-motorized) bikes which are slower and lighter and less likely to hurt severely if a crash occurs between bikes, we are bringing a new danger for non-motorized bicycles. . Motorized bikes travel faster and are much heavier and harm not only the crash victims but also the drivers themselves. I think setting standards of protection such as helmets and registration and insurance requirements similar to Scooters and motor bicycles makes more sense and including and treating these new fast and versatile mobility devices to grow and be part of the transport options. Making a new bureaucracy is not very prudent and sustainable in the long run and limits growth of the transport sector. I ride regular bicycles and am sometimes afraid to ride with or against e-bikes on bike lanes, I think those belong with the regular traffic and should be riding with regular traffic. Second make sure persons riding motorized bicycles should be registered and wear protective equipment at all times while riding.

mahalo

**HB-486**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 4:50:47 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/4/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kyle Kolomona Nakatsuka	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

I am submitting testimony **STRONGLY OPPOSING** HB486, namely the provision banning e-bikes from public roadways. As a lifelong O'ahu resident, I have lived through the challenges that drivers on O'ahu face with parking, traffic, and high costs for gasoline and vehicle registration/insurance/maintenance. I am also aware of complaints about reckless e-bike users. However, I strongly believe HB486 does little to improve the problem of reckless e-bike riders, and will worsen the challenges Hawaii residents face on the road.

**HB486 defines electric bicycles in a way that targets the wrong e-bike users.** The bill defines an electric bicycle as a "low-speed electric bicycle, as defined in title 15 United States Code section 2085", referring to bikes that move less than 20mph on flat ground. Most users of bikes like these are simply trying to commute to work or run errands. If you have heard complaints from constituents about kids who pop wheelies and zoom between traffic, these people are probably using high-powered dirt bikes that would not even be covered by this bill. If this bill is passed, it will hurt responsible road users who just want to get to work. Meanwhile, the reckless riders that your constituents complain about will continue to ride, unaffected by this bill. Any attempts to address problems with reckless e-bike users must be thoughtful and targeted in order to solve the problem.

**Parking and Traffic sucks in Hawaii. E-Bikes are a great solution, and we should encourage, not ban them.** As our population increases, prices rise, and housing gets more packed in Hawaii, our roads have become full of traffic and parked cars. Riding a regular bike to work is hard work, and can take too long. However, e-bikes can make it possible for more people to successfully ride to work, or to get to rail/bus stations to use public transportation. Everyone - even those who do not bike - will benefit from widespread adoption of bicycle commuting, but HB486 takes that away. It is virtually impossible to commute to work on a bicycle without being on a road at some point, so HB486 will kill all of the progress made in alternative transportation.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote against HB486. I welcome any questions or concerns you may have.

Kyle Kolomona Nakatsuka

kylekolomona@gmail.com



**HB-486**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 5:25:51 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/4/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John Rogers	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I oppose HB486. Which prohibits the operation of an electric bicycle on highway, street, roadway, or any other areas designated for motor vehicles. Prohibit unsafe operation of an electric bicycle. Prohibits the removal of a manufacturer- or factory-installed speed limiting device from an electric bicycle. Requires the department of transportation to develop a traffic safety education program and a public awareness campaign. Appropriate funds.

I think the overriding problem with this and other electric bicycle bills that have been introduced during this session is that none of the bills have been coordinated. Hawaii first needs to properly define the different types of electric bikes using national standards (class system) then we can go about determining who, when and where one can be used according to the type of electric bicycle (motorcycle). In the case of low-speed electric bicycles as they are defined currently in §291C-1 they are bicycles and prohibiting them from being used on a highway, street, roadway, or any other areas designated for motor vehicles is ridiculous and unenforceable.

The other issues in this bill are workable but again a low-speed electric bicycle is a bicycle so why should they be treated any differently. Another issue is that a bicycle is defined as a vehicle in §291C-1 and so I would think that laws and fines for vehicles would apply.

Best Regards,

John Rogers

Transportation Co-chair Ewa Neighborhood Board #23

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February 3, 2025

Rep. Darius K. Kila, Chair  
Rep. Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair  
Committee on Transportation  
House of Representatives  
33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, State of Hawai`i

via: <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov>

Dear Committee leadership and members,

Re: **STRONG OPPOSITION TO HB486, RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**

Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 4, 2025  
Time: 10:00 a.m.  
Location: Conference Room 430  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

I write to express strong opposition to this proposed legislation. This bill would extend the ban of electric assist bicycles from sidewalks under HRS §291C-145 to include “**any** highway, street, or roadway” (emphasis added). The bill purports to be based on a legislative findings that, “[i]n December of 2023, the department of transportation reported nine bicyclist fatalities, the highest recorded number of deaths among bicyclists in Hawaii to date,” and “[f]urthermore, electric bicycles can seriously injure pedestrians in a collision and operators are at risk from motorists who do not expect a small, silent, and motorized device riding near them. The legislature finds, in the wake of a recent surge in ridership accidents, it is critical to address the unsafe operation of electric bicycles.”

As an initial matter, no inference can be drawn from a finding that 9 bicyclists were killed on Hawaii’s roadways last year to a finding of “a recent surge in [electric assist] ridership accidents,” or that any of the 9 cyclists were riding electric assist bicycles or that any of the 9 cyclists were culpable for their own deaths.

But most importantly, if we follow the foregoing reasoning, however wholly unsupported, that fatalities and risks of injury associated with the operation of electric assist bicycles warrants the banning of electric bicycles from “**any** highway, street, or roadway” in Hawai`i, then the

legislature must initiate a new bill based on State DOT's findings that from Jan 1 – Nov 26, 2024, 30 motor vehicle occupants were killed, 30 pedestrians were killed, and 23 motorcycle, moped, and scooter operators were killed on Hawaii's roadways; and therefore, to address the unsafe operation of motor vehicles, motorcycles, scooters, and mopeds HRS Title 17 must be amended to prohibit the operation of motor vehicles, scooters, and mopeds on "any sidewalk, highway, street, or roadway" in Hawai'i.

I purchased an electric assist bicycle last year. My bike shop informed me about the State of Hawaii's electric assist bicycle rebate program. I qualified because I am over 18 years old and do not own a motor vehicle. I purchased the bicycle relying on my lawful ability to operate it for transportation purposes. If this section of the proposed bill moves forward, consumers like me that operate their electric assist bicycles for transportation purposes will be subjected to fines and penalties, and potentially, forfeiture, if we actually use the product the State encouraged us to buy.

This legislation also proposes to amend HRS § 291C-143 to provide for additional fines and administrative penalties when such per se offender not only rides on the roadway but does so recklessly or negligently, or exceeds the posted speed limit, or runs stop lights, etc. But the Statewide Traffic Code already provides that "[t]raffic laws apply to persons riding bicycles. Every person riding a bicycle upon a roadway shall be granted *all of the rights and shall be subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle by this chapter,*" HRS § 291C-142 (emphasis added).

The issue roadway safety, and the safe use and enjoyment of all roadway users.

Thank you, Honorable committee leadership and members, for your attention to this issue and consideration of my letter. Mahalo.

Sincerely,

/s/ Georgette A. Yaindl  
GEORGETTE ANNE YAINDL

**HB-486**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 9:09:18 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/4/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Don Baluran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill.