



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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Testimony COMMENTING on H.C.R. 112/H.R. 108
STRONGLY URGING THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT A "PEDESTRIAN FIRST"
POLICY VIA ORDINANCE

REPRESENTATIVE DARIUS K. KILA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Hearing Date: March 25, 2025

Room Number: Conference Room 430
via Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Honolulu City Council
2 regarding the fiscal implications of implementation.

3 **Department Position:** The DOH respectfully provides comments on the potential public health
4 impacts of House Concurrent Resolution 112 (H.C.R. 112) which strongly urges the Honolulu
5 City Council to adopt a "pedestrian first" policy via ordinance.

6 **Department Testimony:** Despite Hawaii's favorable climate, geography, and reputation for
7 active outdoor living, only 25% of Hawaii residents, in 2019, met federal guidelines for physical
8 activity.¹ The design of roads that integrate options like walking and bicycling is a public health
9 concern since the safety and accessibility of a community's built environment can promote or
10 hinder physical activity.

11 Safe, accessible, and walkable communities encourage physical activity and can
12 promote better health outcomes in communities whose populations are at greater risk for
13 serious chronic diseases and conditions such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.²
14 Additionally, encouraging walking and biking reduces reliance on motor vehicles, leading to

¹ Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019.

² CDC *About Physical Activity*. 2021.

1 decreased air pollution in the form of vehicular exhaust and non-exhaust emissions such as tire
2 particulate matter.³ This contributes to cleaner air and a healthier environment, addressing
3 both immediate and long-term public health concerns.

4 Adopting a “pedestrian first” ordinance will prioritize public health, safety, and quality
5 of life for all of City and County of Honolulu residents who walk and roll. This proactive,
6 evidence-based strategy will save lives, create a more walkable and sustainable environment
7 and promote healthier communities.

8 **Offered Amendments:** None

9 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

³ American Lung Association. Health Impact of Pollution | State of the air. (n.d.). <https://www.lung.org/research/sota/health-risks>



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

House Committee on Transportation

03/25/2025 9:10AM

CR 430 & Videoconference

HCR112

STRONGLY URGING THE HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT A "PEDESTRIAN FIRST" POLICY VIA ORDINANCE.

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

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports HCR112**, which would strongly urge the Honolulu City Council to adopt a "Pedestrian First" policy via ordinance.

This resolution is consistent with several goals of the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan, including increasing active and public transportation, providing an equitable and affordable transportation system, and achieving state and county commitments to the environment, health, and culture in the development, maintenance, and operation of the transportation system¹. A "Pedestrian First" policy will reduce pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries and promote equity and accessibility in our transportation network that has historically favored the unimpeded movement of vehicles. The actions associated with a "Pedestrian First" policy will reduce the discomfort and inconveniences associated with walking, encouraging residents to cut back on their vehicle use.

Pedestrians in Honolulu continue to face unsafe conditions on our roads. Urban Honolulu is one of the most dangerous metro areas in the US, identified as 49th in average annual pedestrian fatality rate, with a long-term trend in fatality rate that continues to rise². In order to make Hawaii's streets safer, transportation policy must focus efforts on building robust pedestrian facilities, starting with the Pedestrian Priority Network identified in the Oahu Pedestrian Plan³. These new and upgraded facilities must include Complete Streets elements and effective traffic calming measures such as the Safe System Elements and Goals in the Oahu Vision Zero Action Plan⁴. Our work should be guided by these existing plans to make our roads safe and attractive for walking and rolling.

¹ https://oahumpo.org/?wpfb_dl=3273

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

³ <https://www8.honolulu.gov/completestreets/o%CA%BBahu-pedestrian-plan/>

⁴ <https://www8.honolulu.gov/completestreets/wp-content/uploads/sites/37/2024/09/Oahu-Vision-Zero-Action-Plan.pdf>

Hawaii has set a carbon net-negative emissions target to be achieved no later than 2045, and the provisions laid out in the *Navahine v. Hawaii Department of Transportation* settlement have necessitated swift action in reducing the climate impacts of Hawaii's transportation network⁵. Vehicle miles travelled (VMT) is a key measure of the environmental impact of transportation. A "Pedestrian First" policy that will reduce VMT by promoting walking and rolling in Hawaii's most populous county is key to achieving Hawaii's climate goals and the criteria set in *Navahine v. Hawaii Department of Transportation*.

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 resolution.

⁵ <https://governor.hawaii.gov/newsroom/office-of-the-governor-news-release-historic-agreement-settles-navahine-climate-litigation/>



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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION - Tuesday, March 25, 2025 - 9:10am

Hawai'i Bicycling League Supports HCR112/HR108, relating to Pedestrian First Policy

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

My name is Travis Counsell and I am the Executive 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.

HBL strongly supports HCR 112, urging the City and County of Honolulu to adopt a "Pedestrian First" policy that prioritizes the safety and mobility of pedestrians as the highest modal priority. As an organization dedicated to promoting safe and accessible streets for all, we believe that centering pedestrians in transportation planning and infrastructure decisions is a critical step toward creating a more livable, equitable, and sustainable community.

Vulnerable road users, including pedestrians and bicyclists, must be prioritized to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries. This resolution aligns with Honolulu's Vision Zero commitment to eliminate traffic deaths by addressing systemic issues that disproportionately endanger those walking, biking, and using mobility devices. Studies consistently show that when pedestrian safety is prioritized, communities experience lower crash rates, increased transit use, and enhanced overall public health.

HBL has been a long-time advocate for Complete Streets policies and safer road designs that support people of all ages and abilities. Our work in education, advocacy, and community engagement has demonstrated the widespread benefits of designing streets with pedestrians as the foundation of the transportation hierarchy. By adopting a "Pedestrian First" approach, Honolulu would join other leading cities that have successfully reduced pedestrian injuries and improved multimodal accessibility.

We urge the committee to pass this resolution and encourage the City and County of Honolulu to adopt and implement a "Pedestrian First" policy. Prioritizing pedestrians will make our streets safer, encourage active transportation, and contribute to a healthier, more connected community for all.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Ride Aloha,

Travis Counsell
Executive Director
Hawai'i Bicycling League



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Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Farm to School Network

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: March 25, 2025

To: Representative Darius K. Kila, Chair
Representative Tina Nakada Grandinetti, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Transportation

RE: Support for HCR 112, STRONGLY URGING THE HONOLULU CITY
COUNCIL TO ADOPT A "PEDESTRIAN FIRST" POLICY VIA ORDINANCE

Hrg: March 25, 2025, 9:10 AM, Conference Room 430

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating + Active Living² (HEAL) Statewide Coalition are in **strong support of HCR 112/HR108**, which strongly urges the Honolulu City Council to adopt a "Pedestrian First" policy via ordinance.

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.³ The 2023 Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment for Hawai'i noted that 57% of pedestrian crashes happen at intersections.

Although Hawai'i has a favorable climate, geography, and reputation for active outdoor living, only 24.8% of Hawai'i residents met federal guidelines for physical activity in 2019.⁴ The design of roads that integrate options like walking is a public health concern since the safety and accessibility of a community's built environment can promote or hinder physical activity. This includes removing barriers and providing opportunities to cross streets safely and conveniently access destinations such as bus stops, schools, and worksites.

Safe, accessible, and walkable communities encourage physical activity and can promote better health outcomes in communities whose

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

³ HDOT, "Traffic Fatalities Up 10% From 2023," December 31, 2024.

⁴ Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2019.



populations are at less risk for serious chronic diseases and conditions such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.⁵

In summary, the Honolulu City Council must prioritize the safety of pedestrians by investing in pedestrian infrastructure that would address safety and health concerns for our most vulnerable road users. By normalizing active transportation, such as walking, there is the potential to increase everyday physical activity and uplift public health and well-being.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lauren Loor".

Lauren Loor
Healthy Eating + Active Living Statewide Program Manager

⁵ CDC About Physical Activity. 2021. <https://www.cdc.gov/physical-activity/php/about/index.html>

HCR-112

Submitted on: 3/23/2025 2:00:01 PM

Testimony for TRN on 3/25/2025 9:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tatum Jayleen Crockett	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good morning, Chair Kila, Vice-Chair Grandinetti, and members of the committee. My name is Tatum Crockett and I am currently a senior in St. Andrew's Priory.

As the oldest and longest-lasting form of transportation is by foot, it should undoubtedly be one of the safest. Creating safe pedestrian routes and spaces within the state of Hawaii is crucial for those who choose to walk to their destinations, including future generations.

During the school year of 2014, I was exposed to the reality of the city sidewalks and their risks when a classmate of mine was struck by a vehicle while walking home. In a few seconds, a life was nearly over due to the lack of proper infrastructure regarding sidewalks and the unsafe routes my classmate had to take.

I am 18 now and getting ready to graduate. However, the image of my classmate on the news has stayed persistent in my memory. As a student becoming an integral member of my community, I believe it is my civic responsibility to contribute to the positive difference in the state of Hawaii, bringing me to my testimony in support of HCR112 in companion with HR108.

I believe it is critical for the state to further the investments of safer pedestrian routes, so citizens do not have to walk in fear, keiki can get home safely, parents do not need to question their children's safe arrival, and classmates do not need to see each other on the news. I hope to see these changes shortly, as they are important not just to those who choose to travel by foot but also to the state and the upcoming generations.

Very Respectfully,

Tatum Crockett

HCR-112

Submitted on: 3/23/2025 2:02:42 PM

Testimony for TRN on 3/25/2025 9:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dylan P. Armstrong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It's your job to save pedestrian lives in a state with egregious pedestrian danger, pedestrian injuries, and pedestrian deaths. You must do this regardless of cost, political unpopularity, and bureaucratic obstacles.

Leaders have vision before it's popular to do something different. Be leaders, not weathervanes. When people are led, they come to support better ways of living.

Best,
Dylan P. Armstrong