



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 23, 2023
10:00 A.M.
State Capitol, Room 312 & Videoconference

H.C.R. 133/H.R. 134
URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CONDUCT A STUDY TO
ESTABLISH SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

House Committee on Transportation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** H.C.R. 133/H.R. 134 to conduct a study to establish safe routes to schools.

Providing a safe transportation system is integral to the DOT's mission and safety is addressed in every project that is implemented. While the DOT supports creating and maintaining a transportation system that provides safe mobility for all modes and users, we are concerned that this resolution creates processes that are duplicative and would conflict with the DOT's existing efforts.

Safety is the State's #1 priority. We have reported on our robust educational, enforcement, and engineering programs which we implemented to successfully save lives over years. We are proud partners with all counties who are equally dedicated to zero deaths on our roadways. We meet regularly with the four counties and metropolitan planning organizations to discuss project implementation, safety focus, and opportunities for funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding and programs, including discretionary grant opportunities for safety such as Safe Streets and Roads for All. In this past federal fiscal year, DOT transferred \$25,000,000 to the four counties to provide funding for transit rolling stock and bus operations. The DOT will be providing up to \$60,000,000 of additional funding this fiscal year. Last year, the DOT also expended more than \$45 million for bicycle and pedestrian improvements, which include expenditures on raised crosswalks in school zones and shared use paths.

The problem DOT has is not lack of process or plans, but a lack of funding. Additional funds dedicated specifically to bicycling and pedestrian safety are key to improving alternative modes of transportation. The DOT supports appropriating \$50,000,000 in general funds to the DOT to address bicycle and pedestrian facilities on State and County transportation systems. The funding could be utilized immediately to advance the highest priority initiatives as identified by legislators, community members, and existing bike and ped plans from counties and the State that includes safe routes to schools.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Darius K. Kila, Vice Chair
Committee on Transportation

Eugene Garvilles

March 23, 2023

Support for HCR 133, Urging the Department of Transportation to Conduct a Study to Establish Safe Routes to School

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of HCR 133. I am a resident of Hawai'i and a Data Science student at Chaminade University of Honolulu. I believe in the bill's message of transforming Hawaii's surface transportation systems and infrastructure and contributing to the State's commitments to public health, public safety, economic vitality and environmental sustainability. Passing this bill is necessary, beneficial and practicable not only to our keikis, but to the whole community as well.

This concurrent resolution is necessary to reduce traffic, especially in the downtown areas where most of our schools are located. After the pandemic, everyone is now allowed to travel on the road which means that the issue of traffic congestion is back on the table. We are once again experiencing pre-COVID times of traffic congestion. In 2019, we wasted 92 hours on the road costing us \$1,282¹. Time wasted leads to lack of productivity in both professional and personal aspects of our lives. Proceeding with the study will find you more efficiency for working and single parents and more productivity and quality time in the family. Moreover, cutting travel time on the road reduces air pollution and carbon footprint as Hawaii leads the way to combatting climate change.

It is beneficial. If we think about this in the long term, it will mainly benefit the State's budget operations. According to the State's Department of Health's Operating Budget, the expenditure for health goes from more than \$750 million in 2024 to almost \$850 million in 2025². The safe routes to school encourages physical activity at such a young age. Thus, the push for this program can be an important factor for the prevention of obesity, mental illness and cardiovascular diseases³. Reducing the occurrences of these diseases can also reduce the government's expenditures to health and put them in other areas that require more attention.

This bill is practicable. It can be done. Between 2008 and 2010, Alpine Elementary School in Utah held a "Meals for Miles" program that encouraged a similar approach and reported a reduction in car traffic by 36% and an increase of students who walk and bicycle to school from

¹ <https://www.hawaiinewsnow.com/2019/02/13/new-report-says-honolulu-traffic-is-pretty-bad-its-not-worst/>

² https://budget.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/18.-Department-of-Health-FB23-25-PFP.Lk2_.pdf

³ An N, Chuo J. Walking and Activeness: The First Step toward the Prevention of Strokes and Mental Illness. *Comput Intell Neurosci.* 2022 Mar 14;2022:3440437. doi: 10.1155/2022/3440437. PMID: 35321459; PMCID: PMC8938141.

25% to 70%⁴. Similarly in 2005, Roosevelt Middle School in Oregon formed a School Wellness Committee which went on for 5 years and reported a decrease of 24% in car traffic⁵.

Creating a safe environment for our children ultimately leads to a lot of positive things in the community and for our future. HCR 133 is necessary because it will reduce traffic congestion, steering the State's path to a more environmental and health friendly atmosphere for its people. It is beneficial to the State's yearly budget so we can re-route our resources to other areas in need. This is practicable because other States have done similar programs and provided significant results. I urge the committee to pass HCR 133. Thank you again for this opportunity to testify.

⁴ [https://www.transportation.gov/mission/health/Safe-Routes-to-School-Programs#:~:text=Safe%20Routes%20to%20School%20\(SRTS,hour%20are%20for%20school%20travel.](https://www.transportation.gov/mission/health/Safe-Routes-to-School-Programs#:~:text=Safe%20Routes%20to%20School%20(SRTS,hour%20are%20for%20school%20travel.)

⁵ [https://www.transportation.gov/mission/health/Safe-Routes-to-School-Programs#:~:text=Safe%20Routes%20to%20School%20\(SRTS,hour%20are%20for%20school%20travel.](https://www.transportation.gov/mission/health/Safe-Routes-to-School-Programs#:~:text=Safe%20Routes%20to%20School%20(SRTS,hour%20are%20for%20school%20travel.)