



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

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February 24, 2009

TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

House Bill 140 – Relating to Statewide Traffic Code

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) is a statewide board with seventeen (17) members appointed by the Governor, thirteen (13) of whom are persons with disabilities or family members. The Board's mission is to advocate and promote full inclusion, independence, equal access, and quality of life for persons with disabilities in society. This testimony represents a position voted upon by the Legislative Committee of the Board.

DCAB opposes House Bill 140 because it may cause some problems for people with disabilities who use electric personal assistive mobility devices. We prefer the wording from House Bill 141 that provides an exception for police officers and people with disabilities.

We suggest an amendment to page 4, lines 5 and 6 to reflect similar wording from House Bill 141:

“An electric personal assistive mobility device shall be prohibited on sidewalks in business districts except when being used by a police officer or person with a disability.”

With this change, DCAB will support House Bill 140.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES W. FLEMING
Chairperson

FRANCINE WAI
Executive Director



Representative Jon Riki Karamatsu, Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

Tuesday, February 24, 2009; 2:05 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 325

RE: HB 140 – Relating to the Statewide Traffic Code

Chair Karamatsu, Vice-Chair Ito, and Members of the Committee:

Segway Inc., the global leader in developing advanced electric propulsion technologies including the Segway Personal Transporter (PT), supports House Bill 140 – Relating to the Statewide Traffic Code which gives counties the ability to regulate the use of electric personal assistive mobility devices on sidewalks.

The Segway PT was introduced in 2001 and shortly thereafter, a vast majority of states, including Hawaii, passed legislation defining the device as an Electric Personal Assistive Mobility Device or EPAMD. To date, tens of thousands of devices have been sold into the commercial and consumer marketplaces. Just over 1,000 law enforcement agencies worldwide deploy Segway PTs and a recent evaluation by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) declared the Segway PT to be “one of the best community policing tools”. In everyday life, the Segway PT is rapidly becoming a significant transportation option for individuals who prefer a highly efficient, safe and zero emissions vehicle to offset escalating gas prices and reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

The device, which is manufactured in the United States, is engineered with safety as the highest priority. Undergoing intensive testing prior to leaving the manufacturing plant, the Segway PT has been tested by four independent safety agencies, including the U.S. Department of Transportation, and all have concluded the device to be safe, stable and extremely maneuverable and appropriate for non-motorized pathways. Sold only and directly through authorized dealers, including one in Honolulu, the Segway PT is only placed in the hands of a user once that person undergoes product orientation and training. This commitment to safety clearly distinguishes the company and its products from all other two and three wheeled motorized devices.

The current Hawaii EPAMD law restricts usage of the device primarily to sidewalks at a speed not to exceed 8 mph. HB 140 seeks to amend the current law by adding a local government control option. Segway Inc. agrees that local governments should have a say in when and where an EPAMD is operated. However, we respectfully request that any further regulation imposed on EPAMD use would be based upon actual issues which have arisen with the Segway PT itself and not other “like” devices.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Dailida
Director, Government Affairs
Segway Inc.