

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 2, 2009

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SENATE BILL NO. 168

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

The Department does not support this bill. All terrain vehicles (ATVs) should not be allowed on public roads, because they are not built to conform to Federal Motor Vehicle Safety standards. These vehicles are built for off-road use only and using ATVs without the full complement of safety features required for other light vehicles, such as passenger cars would result in significantly greater risk of deaths and serious injuries.

Although we cannot comment as to the fuel efficiency of an ATV as compared to that of a regular car, we do not believe that it is appropriate to significantly increase the risk of deaths and serious injuries just to save fuel.

Another concern with this bill is the proposed definition of an ATV. It includes three-wheeled motor vehicles, which are already defined as motorcycles in section 286-2, HRS and 291C-1, HRS.

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

Commissioners
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KU'UHAKU PARK, Vice-Chair
LAURENCE BALTER
RICHARD HOUCK
WILLIAM LINDEMANN
DAVID R. MARSHALL
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JOHN B. RAY
DAVID SPROAT

January 30, 2009

Chair, J. Kalani English
Vice Chair, Mike Gabbard
Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation, International and Intergovernmental
Affairs,

I am speaking in support for Senate Bill 168 Relating to Transportation.

At its regular meeting on December 18, 2008, the Commission voted to recommend the Department of Transportation seek amendment of the Hawaii Revised Statutes to adopt a universal mandatory safety helmet law to be required for all operators of any age and to include motorcycles in addition to mopeds and motor scooters. Our letter to the Director of Transportation on our recommendation is attached.

While we would prefer a universal mandatory helmet law that includes all operators of motorcycles, mopeds, motor scooters and bicycles, we hope the passage of SB 168 is the first step of achieving that goal.

Your passage of SB 168 is recommended.

Sincerely yours,

Owen Miyamoto
Chair
Commission on Transportation

Attachment

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Commissioners
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KU'UHAKU PARK, Vice Chair
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MEL MIYAMOTO
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JOHN RAY
JOHN ROMANOWSKI

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

December 18, 2008

Brennon T. Morioka, PhD
Director of Transportation
869 Punchbowl Street
Honolulu, HI 96813-5097

Dear Mr. Morioka:

Subject: Mandatory Helmet Use

Traumatic Brain Injury from traffic accidents is a concern to the members of the Commission on Transportation; therefore, your Commission on Transportation at its regular meeting on December 18, 2008 voted to recommend that the Department of Transportation support universal mandatory motorcycle helmet use.

The 2001-2006 motorcyclist fatality rate for Hawaii - a percentage of fatal traffic injuries - was 39% higher than it was for the rest of the United States. Motorcyclist deaths were the 7th leading cause of fatal unintentional injuries in the state. Of the victims, 68% were not wearing a helmet at the time of the crash.¹ The 30 Hawaii motorcycle fatalities in 2005 accounted for nearly 22 percent of all motor vehicle accident fatalities that year, the second highest percentage in the nation.²

Trauma costs for all motorcycle injuries for 2007 totaled \$11,453,238. Of that amount, \$2,203,816 remains unpaid. Queen's Trauma Center saw 128 motorcycle injury patients. Eight people have paid their bill in full. Partial payment has been received from 108 people. Twelve people have paid nothing.³

The Hawaii Strategic Highway Safety Plan Core Committee endorses enactment of a universal helmet law, as does the National Transportation Safety Board, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Governors Highway Safety Association, and the Motorcycle Safety Foundation.

Increased helmet use is the most immediate and effective way to reduce the physical, emotional, and monetary burdens to riders, their families, the health care system, and the government.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Owen Miyamoto".

Owen Miyamoto
Chair
Commission on Transportation

cc: Honorable Linda Lingle, Governor

¹ "Injuries in Hawaii 2001-2006", Hawaii State Department of Health

² "Hawaii Strategic Highway Safety Plan 2007 thru 2012", State of Hawaii, Department of Transportation

³ The Queen's Medical Center

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Transportation, international and Intergovernmental Affairs

Monday, Feb. 2, 2009 1:15 p.m.

Conference Room 224, State Capitol

Re: Senate Bill 168 Relating to Transportation

Chair English, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and committee members:

I am Carolyn Fujioka on behalf of State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company, a mutual company owned by its policyholders. **State Farm supports SB168.**

State Farm is vitally concerned with reducing motorized vehicle injuries and deaths on and off roadways. In the interests of our policyholders who ride mopeds, all-terrain vehicles, motorcycles, and other motorized vehicles, and for all of us who pay for the medical and societal costs incurred from the fatalities and severe head injuries of non-helmeted riders, State Farm supports a helmet law and appropriate fines for violations.

Programs that promote voluntary use of helmets do not achieve the high levels of helmet use found in helmet law states. We urge your favorable consideration of SB 168.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.