

SB 295

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IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 12, 2009

TESTIMONY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SENATE BILL NO. 295

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Senate Bill 295 proposes that high occupancy vehicle lanes may be used by hybrid and other energy-efficient vehicles, regardless of the number of occupants.

The Department supports the intent of this bill. The purpose of this legislation, which would allow the use of high occupancy lanes regardless of occupancy levels, would serve as a no-cost incentive to encourage the purchase of electric vehicles.

Fully electric vehicles with only the driver would be allowed in the high occupancy lanes in order to provide an incentive for people to purchase fully electric vehicles. Currently, the number of such vehicles is relatively low (178 vehicles statewide). However, when the usage of electric vehicles increases, the DOT would need to exercise our jurisdiction over occupancy requirements to ensure that the HOV lanes remain for their primary purpose, which is to move cars with multiple passengers inside.

Testimony before the Senate Committee on
Energy and Environment

S.B. 295, Relating to Transportation

Thursday, February 12, 2009
4:00 p.m., Conference Room 225

By Carlos Perez Loriga
Director
Customer Technology Applications Division
Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc.

Chair Gabbard, Vice Chair English, and members of the Committee:

My name is Carlos Perez Loriga and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Electric Company, Inc., and its subsidiary utilities, Maui Electric Company, Ltd., and Hawaii Electric Light Company, Inc.

S. B. 295 proposes to allow hybrid and other energy-efficient vehicles to utilize high occupancy vehicle lanes regardless of the number of passengers in the vehicle.

Hawaiian Electric Company strongly supports S.B. 295, to promote the increased use of fuel efficient hybrid vehicles. We encourage the committee to consider an amendment to specifically include plug-in hybrid electric vehicles as well. Increased consumer acceptance of energy-efficient vehicles, including plug-in hybrid electric vehicles, will aid in the reduction of greenhouse emissions and fossil fuel use and will also help enable the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative's goal of 70% clean, renewable energy by 2030.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Sierra Club Hawai'i Chapter

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

February 12, 2009, 4:00 P.M.

(Testimony is 1 page long)

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 295

Chair Gabbard and members of the Committee:

The Sierra Club, Hawai'i Chapter, with 5500 dues paying members statewide, *supports* SB 295, providing that commuter lanes may be used by hybrids.

Hawai'i is the most dependent state in the nation on imported oil. Some 50 million barrels are imported annually, nearly 80% of which originate from foreign sources. In addition, over 805,000 tons of coal are imported into our state. These sources provide power for over 92% of Hawaii's electricity generation. The combustion of these resources also contributes over 23 million tons of climate changing greenhouse gas into our atmosphere annually.

Hawaii's economic, environmental, and energy security demand that we reduce the amount of fossil fuel imported and consumed in Hawaii. This bill is a solid step in that direction. With little or no cost to the State, this measure creates a subtle enticement that is sure to register when people decide what automobile to purchase.

When we're trying to solve big problems, sometimes we need to remember to focus on the little things.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.