

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



TESTIMONY BY:

EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

February 8, 2024
9:00 a.m.

State Capitol, RM 312 & Videoconference

H.B. 2702
RELATING TO ROAD IMPROVEMENTS
House Committee on Transportation

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) **supports** H.B. 2702 that appropriates funds for equipment and one full time equivalent position within the HDOT to conduct improvements on Hana Highway.

The additional staff and funds appropriated in this measure will support improvements that HDOT was not previously able to fund along the route.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Council Chair
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Vice-Chair
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
Tasha Kama

Councilmembers
Tom Cook
Gabe Johnson
Tamara Paltin
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Shane M. Sinenci
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Director of Council Services
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

COUNTY COUNCIL
COUNTY OF MAUI
200 S. HIGH STREET
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793
www.MauiCounty.us

February 7, 2024

Mahina Poepoe, Representative
State of Hawaii Legislature

Dear Ms. Poepoe and Legislators:

**SUBJECT: STRONG SUPPORT FOR BILL 2702
HANA HIGHWAY ROAD REPAIR & IMPROVEMENTS**

The Hana Highway in East Maui is one of the Hawaii's most sought after attractions, only second to Haleakala Mountain and Kilauea Volcano. Hundreds of cars traverse this narrow and often one-lane bridge highway. Both tourists and residents drive the road for adventure and for daily businesses. The gas trucks, tour vans, school buses, freight vehicles, emergency vehicles and public transit all use this important highway on a daily basis.

Maintaining this stretch of road can be challenging and not without periodically closing sections of the road to traffic. Paving continues to be a priority and a challenge getting equipment out there to limited staging areas. Continuous brush cutting is required to keep the visibility clear and cliff stability measures are always needed in certain areas. Lately, many of the old timber needs to be scaled back since recent storms have taken them out along with electrical lines and leaving massive power outages in East Maui. In addition, informational signage, emergency call boxes and turn out areas remain to be much needed infrastructure along the highway. The restrooms are in need of expansion to accommodate the residents and visitors along the way.

The recent establishment of a reservation system at Waianapanapa State Park has helped to manage traffic congestion on the highway, and the annual

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revenues have helped to pay for highway road projects. However, since East Maui is a popular tourist destination, the regular upkeep of its highway is a much needed project and warrants the help of important TAT funding resources. Please approve HB 2702 in your efforts.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shane M. Sinenci". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'S'.

SHANE M. SINENCI
Councilmember
East Maui District

HB-2702

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 7:26:42 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nichole Hutaff Nakamura	Valley Isle Excursions	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a tour operator that employs over 30 Maui residences, the Hana Highway is a significant part of our business operations. Our company alone transports over 1,500 visitors in and out of Hana Monthly, supporting other local businesses along that corridor. We have been in operation for over 20 years and the rapid deterioration of the Hana Highway is evident. We have scaled our tour operations from 7 days a week, to 5 days a week, as our way to do our part in helping to alleviate the daily challenges that Hana residence experience in their commutes on Hana Highway. However, this does not prevent other tour operators or independent travelers from utilizing the road. It is also the only road that connects the community from Kailua to Kipahulu, to basic life necessities, medical services, emergency services and other resources that are not within reach in the Kailua to Kipahulu community. The reality is, that no matter what we do as individuals, community members or businesses to help slow down or mitigate the rapid deterioration of the Highway, it just simply needs maintenance and repairs. The significant increase in visitor traffic over recent years, and natural elements that contribute to the deterioration of the Highway, need to be addressed immediately. The Highway needs repairs to continue to serve the needs of the community and the economic importance it carries for Maui's visitor industry. Funding to maintain and repair Hana highway should be significant and included in the fiscal budget.

HB-2702

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 11:38:02 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Crawford	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hana Highway is our lifeline. It is also heavily used by visitor traffic. It is often disrupted due to tree falls and landslides. We depend on the state Department of Transportation to maintain the road in good working order, and greatly appreciate the support for ongoing maintenance.

HB-2702

Submitted on: 2/7/2024 8:23:11 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/8/2024 9:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Earle Medeiros	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair & Transportation Committee,

I support funding for improvements of the Hana Highway. This is much needed especially with all of the traffic we are now having, also many other things such as repairs and many, many other things etc..

Aloha,

Earle Kuikahi Medeiros

Hana Resident

(808)248-8606