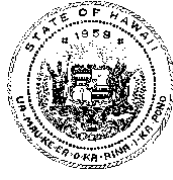


JOSH GREEN, M. D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
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KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMŌHALA LIMAHANA
235 S. BERETANIA STREET
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Statement of
BRENN A. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
Thursday, March 21, 2024
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of
HCR 211 / HR 191 URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT TO EVALUATE SUBSIDIZED PUBLIC TRANSIT FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and the members of the committee.

The purpose of HCR 211 and HR 191 is to urge the Department of Accounting and General Services and Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) to collaboratively evaluate options to encourage the use and subsidize the cost of public transportation for state employees. DHRD offers the following comments:

DHRD appreciates the intent of the resolution, however, due to the potential fiscal impact on state finances, we recommend that the Department of Budget and Finance be asked to consider the fiscal impact of subsidizing the cost of public transportation for state employees on the budget.

DHRD also provides the following information for the committee's consideration:

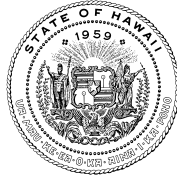
- As of March 15, 2024, there are 238 eligible Executive Branch employees (excluding the Department of Education and University of Hawai'i) enrolled in the State's Pre-Tax Transportation Benefit Pilot (PTBP) Program, administered by DHRD, who have their monthly bus/rail pass fees on their HOLO card deducted on a pre-tax basis, which costs \$80.00 per person. The annual cost of that benefit is \$228,480.00 at current prices.
- We have no current data or accounting available on the number of employees who would be interested in Vanpool, Senior Annual Bus/Rail Passes, or neighbor

island public transportation services should those modes of transportation be offered under the Program.

- We do not have data or accounting information for government agencies that are not under DHRD's jurisdiction.
- Expanding the program to the neighbor islands would require additional staff resources and operational costs to handle the administration of the program with the various transportation providers on each island, computer system interfacing, submittal of pass orders, delivery of passes, etc.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KEITH A. REGAN
COMPTROLLER
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWÉ LAULĀ
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WRITTEN TESTIMONY
OF
KEITH A. REGAN, COMPTROLLER
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES
TO THE
COMMITTEES ON LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024, 10:00 A.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM 309 AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, STATE CAPITOL

H. R. 191 and H. C. R. 211

URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT TO EVALUATE SUBSIDIZING PUBLIC TRANSIT FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES.

Chairs Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and members of the Committees, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on H. R. 191 and H. C. R. 211.

H. R. 191 and H. C. R. 211 is urging the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS) and the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD) to evaluate subsidizing public transit for public employees. DAGS offers testimony in **support** of this measure. We note that incentives for state employees such as pre-tax transportation benefit bus passes and state parking exist. DAGS would be willing to work with DHRD in evaluating options that would further encourage the use of public transportation by state employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this matter.



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

March 21, 2024, 10:00 AM

Room 309

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR 211 and HR 191

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Garrett, and members of the Committee:

Blue Planet Foundation **supports HCR 211/HR 191**, which directs the Department of Accounting and General Services and Department of Human Resources Development to conduct a thorough evaluation of the potential benefits and implementation strategies for providing free or subsidized public transportation for state employees.

Blue Planet Foundation is a Hawai'i-based nonprofit organization committed to help Hawai'i cut its carbon emissions and avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Through our advocacy for renewable energy, energy efficiency, and clean transportation, we seek to make our communities stronger, our energy more secure, our environment healthier, and our economy more robust.

Blue Planet Foundation also manages the Sustainable Transportation Coalition of Hawai'i (STCH), which is a group of organizations, businesses, and individuals aimed at driving local efforts to reduce fossil fuel use in Hawai'i's transportation sector. STCH is part of a national network of nearly 100 coalitions that make up the U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities program, tasked with accelerating solutions like alternative fuels, alternative modes of transportation, and vehicle efficiency.

Ground transportation accounts for roughly 25% of the greenhouse gas emissions in Hawai'i and roughly 1/3 of our imported oil use. A transportation transformation is not only better for the environment, but the state in general. As we reduce dependence on imported oil, it can bolster our 100% renewable energy target and reduce Hawai'i's high cost of living, since transportation on average is the single largest expense behind housing.

By incentivizing public transit usage through free or subsidized access for state employees, Hawai'i can make meaningful progress in reducing its carbon footprint and promoting sustainable mobility choices. There are several reasons to support this resolution, including:

Climate Change Mitigation: Reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles on the road is essential for reducing emissions and mitigating the impacts of climate change. By

encouraging state employees to utilize public transportation, we can significantly decrease the carbon emissions associated with commuting.

Public Health Benefits: Encouraging the use of public transit not only reduces emissions but also promotes public health. Public transportation reduces air pollution, which can have detrimental effects on respiratory health. Additionally, promoting walking, biking, and using public transit supports active transportation, leading to improved physical fitness and overall well-being.

Equity and Accessibility: Access to affordable transportation is a social justice issue, particularly for low-income individuals and communities. By providing free or subsidized public transit for state employees, we can increase accessibility to jobs, education, healthcare, and other essential services to support our state workers, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

Economic Benefits: Investing in public transportation infrastructure and incentivizing its use can have positive economic impacts. It can reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, attract businesses along public transit routes, and enhance the overall livability of our communities.

For these reasons, and in alignment with Hawai'i's goals of promoting sustainability, reducing emissions, and creating more equitable and resilient communities, we urge the legislature to adopt HCR 211/HR 191.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.