



**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

March 21, 2024, 10:00 AM
Room 325

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HCR 51 and HR 40

Aloha Chair Lowen, Chair Todd, and members of the Committees:

Blue Planet Foundation **supports HCR 51/HR 40**, which directs the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission to develop strategies aimed at reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the state and making recommendations to decrease ground transportation emissions associated with VMT.

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.

With ground transportation accounting for roughly 25% of carbon emissions in Hawai'i and around 1/3 of our imported oil use, Hawai'i faces unique challenges when it comes to transportation and its environmental impact. As an island state heavily reliant on fossil fuels for transportation, we are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and disruptions to our economy and way of life.

It is imperative that we take bold and proactive steps to reduce our carbon footprint, and addressing VMT is a crucial component of that effort. Furthermore, the goals of HCR 51/HR 40 to develop and adopt a statewide VMT reduction target and strategy was the number one recommendation supported by the Hawai'i Climate Commission's December 2022 Report:

“Investing in Transportation Choices: Recommendations for Safe, Sustainable, Affordable, and Reliable Mobility.”¹

Reducing VMT not only helps to lower carbon emissions but also offers a myriad of additional benefits. By promoting alternative transportation options such as public transit, biking, walking, and carpooling, we can alleviate traffic congestion, improve air quality, enhance public health, and create more livable and vibrant communities. Furthermore, reducing VMT aligns with Hawai'i's broader goals of achieving energy independence, promoting sustainability, and fostering economic resilience.

We commend the collaborative efforts of the Hawai'i Climate Change Commission to take a proactive approach to help reduce ground transportation emissions and recognize the interconnectedness of transportation, climate change, and public health. We urge the Legislature to support this resolution and provide the necessary resources and guidance to the Commission to carry out this important work and help reduce VMT in Hawai'i in furtherance of our critical carbon reduction goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HCR 51 and HR 40.

¹ “Transportation Choices: Recommendations for Safe, Sustainable, Affordable, and Reliable Mobility.” *Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission*, Dec. 2022, climate.hawaii.gov/hi-mitigation/hi-clean-cars-faq/transportation-choices/.