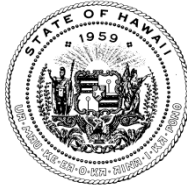


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



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

EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
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Deputy Directors
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele
DREANALEE K. KALILI
TAMMY L. LEE
CURT T. OTAGURO
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

Thursday, February 12, 2026
8:30 AM
State Capitol, 430

HB1523
RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE TRAFFIC CODE

House Committee on Transportation

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) opposes H.B. No. 1523.

This bill amends Section 291C-33 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to remove references to countdown timers as it relates to pedestrian-control signals, including the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins. The existing language in Section 291C-33 of the HRS regarding pedestrian countdown timers provides clarity by establishing that a pedestrian shall finish crossing a roadway but shall not begin crossing a roadway during the countdown. Eliminating references to countdown timers may result in pedestrians being unsure of their responsibilities in a crosswalk that operates a pedestrian-control signal with countdown timer.

HDOT understands that under the changes H.B. No. 1523 proposes, pedestrians would still be prohibited from crossing a roadway during the countdown, which coincides with flashing the "Don't Walk" or "Upraised Palm" signal. However, HDOT would oppose the intent of this bill if it is to permit pedestrians to begin crossing during this phase for the following reasons:

- Allowing pedestrians to start to cross a roadway during the countdown would introduce the potential for pedestrians to make individual decisions that create unpredictable situations. This unpredictability could disrupt safety and efficiency, leaving other road users to navigate scenarios they may not anticipate but remain responsible for.
- Pedestrians crossing the street against nationally established traffic control devices and contrary to other road user expectations would be challenging especially for children and elderly persons, our most vulnerable road users. A pedestrian may mistakenly believe it is safe to cross the roadway, or dart in front of a turning vehicle as they rush to cross the street before conflicting vehicular traffic proceeds. Such decisions force drivers into sudden, unanticipated situations that could have devastating consequences.

There were 148 pedestrian fatalities and 495 serious injuries from 2021 through 2025, using preliminary data for 2025. Pedestrians aged 17 and younger or aged 65 and older were involved in 42 percent of pedestrian fatalities and 34 percent of pedestrian serious injuries. Overall, pedestrians accounted for 28 percent all traffic fatalities and 20 percent of all serious injuries during this period. Ensuring predictability for all roadway users is essential for safe interactions between pedestrians and vehicles, and advancing the State's goal of eliminating traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

Committee on Transportation

February 12, 2026 at 8:30AM

Conference Room 430

HB 1523

Relating to Transportation

Dear Chair Kila, Vice Chair Miyake, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports HB 1523**, which removes references to countdown timers as it relates to pedestrian-control signals, including the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins.

This bill is consistent with several goals of the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan including support for active and public transportation, promoting an equitable transportation system, and improving air quality and protecting environmental and cultural assets.¹ Removing the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins, makes walking a less hostile form of transportation, and can encourage more people to walk or roll to their destination.

Although the law that makes it illegal for pedestrians to step into the street once the clock starts counting down was passed to address pedestrian safety, pedestrian deaths have increased since the law's passing. Hawai'i road deaths hit an 18-year peak, with a spike in pedestrian and motorcycle deaths contributing to the more than 20% increase in deaths compared to 2024.²

The Federal Highway Administration lists proven safety countermeasures that have shown to decrease pedestrian crashes, hospitalizations, and deaths.³ Some examples include pedestrian medians or refuges, road diets, leading pedestrian intervals, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons. In addition to passing this law, proven safety countermeasures can be implemented systemically to truly improve pedestrian safety.

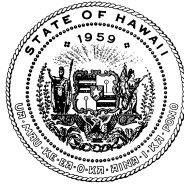
¹ https://oahumpo.org/?wpfb_dl=2215

² <https://www.civilbeat.org/2026/01/2025-hawaii-road-deaths-hit-18-year-peak/#:~:text=The%20state's%202025%20road%20fatalities%20included%3A&text=38%20pedestrians,5%20other%20non%2Doccupant%20fatalities>

³ [Proven Safety Countermeasures | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#)

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a long-range (25-year horizon) metropolitan transportation plan, referred to as the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), which encourages and promotes a safe and efficient transportation system to serve the mobility needs of people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, and takes into consideration resiliency needs, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

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



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO
P.O. Box 3378
Honolulu, HI 96801-3378
doh.testimony@doh.hawaii.gov

**Testimony COMMENTING on H.B. 1523
RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE TRAFFIC CODE**

REPRESENTATIVE DARIUS K. KILA, CHAIR
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Hearing Date: February 12, 2026
8:30 AM

Room Number: Conference Room 430
via Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** None

2 **Department Position:** The Department of Health (DOH) provides comments on House Bill 1523
3 (H.B. 1523), which removes references to countdown timers as it relates to pedestrian-control
4 signals including the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a
5 countdown timer begins.

6 **Department Testimony:** This measure represents a practical and essential modernization of
7 Hawaii's traffic laws by removing unnecessarily burdensome regulations that prioritize technical
8 compliance over actual public safety. Currently, HRS §291C-33 prohibits pedestrians from
9 entering a crosswalk once a countdown timer has begun, a rule that accounts for approximately
10 46 percent of pedestrian citations.¹ This allows for the issuance of \$130 "jaywalking" tickets to
11 individuals who are behaving reasonably and have ample time to reach the other side of the
12 street safely. Rather than promoting safety, these overly technical regulations criminalize
13 ordinary behavior and turn informational safety tools into enforcement traps. By treating the

¹ Seitz A. Freedom to walk: decriminalizing jaywalking and shifting investment towards safe, accessible pedestrian infrastructure. Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice. March 2024. Accessed February 10, 2026. <https://hiappleseed.org/publications/freedom-to-walk>

1 countdown as a strict "do not enter" signal, the current law fails to provide pedestrians with the
2 data needed to make informed decisions based on their own walking speed and mobility needs.

3 Removing these barriers would increase safe access to physical activity and support
4 public health. Despite Hawaii's favorable climate, geography, and reputation for active outdoor
5 living, only 33% of adult and 18% of high school students in Hawaii met federal guidelines for
6 physical activity.^{2,3} A community's built environment can either promote or hinder this activity;
7 by decriminalizing the act of entering a crosswalk during a countdown, we create a more
8 accessible and walkable environment that supports those at risk for chronic diseases such as
9 obesity and heart disease. Aligning our statutes with best practices such as in San Francisco⁴
10 ensures that our infrastructure serves its intended purpose: to facilitate safe, efficient, and
11 equitable movement for all residents, including seniors and those with disabilities, without the
12 threat of avoidable and punitive citations.

13 **Offered Amendments:** None

14 Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

² Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2023.

³ Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Youth Risk Behavioral Survey, 2023;

https://hhdw.org/report/query/result/yrbs/PhysActMeetRec/PhysActMeetRec_HS_ST.html

⁴ City and County of San Francisco. Pedestrian signals. SF Better Streets. 2025. Accessed February 10, 2026. <https://sfbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/pedestrian-safety-and-traffic-calming/pedestrian-sig...>



Testimony in Support for HB1523 - Relating to the Statewide Traffic Code
Committee on Transportation (TRN)
Thursday, February 12th, 2026 at 8:30AM

Dear Chair Kila, Vice Chair Miyake, and members of the TRN committee,
Mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1523**, which would amend Section 291C-33, Hawaii Revised Statutes, would remove reference to countdown timers, including the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins.

HB1523 represents a practical and important step toward reducing unnecessarily burdensome pedestrian regulations that do not improve safety and instead contribute to confusing rules and avoidable citations. As Hawai'i Appleseed's research demonstrates, Hawai'i relies heavily on pedestrian enforcement—issuing more than 30,000 jaywalking-related citations between 2018 and 2023—without evidence that this approach reduces pedestrian injuries or fatalities.¹

Roughly 46 percent of these citations were given for violating HRS§291C-33,² which prohibits pedestrians from crossing on the Don't Walk Sign or against the Countdown Timer. Under these laws, **pedestrians can receive a \$130 jaywalking ticket for crossing the street after the countdown timer has started**, even if they have ample time to cross. Rather than promoting safety, these overly technical pedestrian regulations criminalize ordinary, reasonable behavior.

Pedestrian countdown signals were not designed to prohibit people from entering a crosswalk once the countdown begins. According to national best practices, including guidance used by cities like San Francisco, countdown timers exist to provide pedestrians with additional information—specifically, how much time remains to safely cross the street.³ These signals help people make informed decisions based on their walking speed, mobility needs, and comfort level. Treating the countdown as a strict “do not enter” signal misinterprets its purpose and turns a safety tool into an enforcement trap.

This misinterpretation disproportionately impacts seniors, people with disabilities, parents with children, and others who may need more time to cross. It also increases the likelihood that pedestrians will rush into crossings or avoid signalized intersections altogether—outcomes that undermine, rather than enhance, safety.

¹ Seitz, A, “Freedom to Walk: Decriminalizing Jaywalking and Shifting Investment Towards Safe, Accessible Pedestrian Infrastructure,” Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, March, 2024.
<https://hiappleseed.org/publications/freedom-to-walk>.

² Ibid.

³ City and County of San Francisco, “Pedestrian Signals,” sbetterstreets, 2025.
<https://sbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/pedestrian-safety-and-traffic-calming/pedestrian-signals/index.html>.

In summary, Hawai'i Appleseed urges the Legislature to support HB1523 as a commonsense reform that improves clarity, fairness, and safety for people walking in Hawai'i. Reducing unnecessary pedestrian regulations is a critical step toward streets that work for everyone.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Abbey Seitz". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Abbey Seitz

Director of Transportation Equity

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice



P.O. Box 392, Kilauea, Kauai, HI, 96754

PHONE: (808) 212-4765 • FAX: (808) 828-2027 • E-MAIL: bbrody1@hawaii.rr.com • WEB SITE: www.getfitkauai.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
Thursday, February 12th at 8:30AM
Testimony in Support of HB1523 – Statewide Traffic Code

Aloha Chair Kila, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members of the House Transportation Committee,

My name is Bev Brody, and I am writing on behalf of Get Fit Kaua'i, the Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) coalition of Kauai County, representing more than 100 members. We are in strong support of HB1523.

Under current law, pedestrians may be fined \$130 for beginning to cross after the countdown timer starts — even when they have ample time to cross safely. This rule is confusing, overly punitive, and does not reflect how people naturally navigate intersections.

From 2018 to 2023, Hawai'i issued an average of 5,000 jaywalking tickets per year — far higher than other jurisdictions — with no evidence that this level of enforcement has improved safety outcomes. Instead, it has created unnecessary financial strain for residents who walk out of necessity.

HB1523 removes an outdated and burdensome requirement that does not meaningfully enhance safety. Simplifying the law makes it easier for pedestrians to understand and comply with crossing rules, while allowing enforcement to focus on behaviors that truly endanger lives.

We respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1523.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. *BBrody*

Bev Brody
Get Fit Kauai – Director
H.E.A.L. (Healthy Eating Active Living) Community Coalition of Kauai County
(808) 212-4765



HIPHI Board

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Hawaiian Research Office

Danette Wong Tomiyasu, MBA
Retired, Hawai'i State Department of
Health

HIPHI Initiatives

Coalition for a
Tobacco-Free Hawai'i

Community-Based Research &
Evaluation

Community Health
Worker Initiatives

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Climate Change and Health
Working Group

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: February 10, 2026

To: Representative Darius K. Kila, Chair
Representative Tyson K. Miyake, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Transportation

RE: Support for HB 1523, Relating to the Statewide Traffic Code

Hrg: February 12, 2026 at 8:30 AM in Conference Room 430

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating + Active Living² (HEAL) Statewide Coalition are in **support of HB 1523**, which removes language surrounding countdown timers at crosswalks.

This bill takes an important step toward allowing pedestrians freedom to safely cross at designated crosswalks regardless of time remaining during the walk cycle.

Removing Timers Increases Safety and Promotes Active Lifestyles

Removing the language surrounding the use of the countdown timers at designated crosswalks allows pedestrians to utilize the entire walk cycle to cross the street safely and efficiently. Additionally, following the direction of the simple walk/don't walk designations streamlines decision making for the pedestrian. Removing calculations from pedestrians can help increase safe actions.

Drivers Show Decreased Speeds Without Timers

Removing timers also provides clear direction to motorists to maintain a holding pattern as they may use the timers to anticipate signal changes, either accelerating to clear an intersection or gauging whether they can safely proceed.³ Decreased vehicle speed in intersections can help reduce collisions, providing increased safety for all pedestrians.

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

³ Safe Systems Solutions. (2025, January 21). *Safe System Snippet 411: Pedestrian countdown timers – benefits and challenges*.

<https://safesystemsolutions.com.au/safe-system-snippet-411-pedestrian-countdown-timer-s-benefits-and-challenges/>



This change to the statewide traffic code will allow pedestrians to move freely and safely across the street at any time during the walk cycle to access vital services, employment, and recreational opportunities.

HIPHI and the HEAL coalition support HB 1523 and respectfully ask the committee to pass this measure.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patti Hatzistavarakis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Patti" being more prominent.

Patti Hatzistavarakis
Active Transportation Specialist

HB-1523

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 11:20:31 AM

Testimony for TRN on 2/12/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the committee,

I am testifying in strong support of HB1523, which removes the unreasonable requirement that a pedestrian must begin crossing a roadway *before* a countdown signal begins. This common-sense change modernizes our traffic code to reflect how people actually walk and removes a trap that currently allows for a \$130 fine for a harmless action.

The data shows this punitive approach is not working. Hawai‘i issues thousands of these tickets annually without corresponding improvements in pedestrian safety. The law, as written, prioritizes technical compliance over the real-world goal of allowing people to cross the street safely and completely.

This bill aligns with the national movement toward "safe crossing" laws and removes an arbitrary and confusing rule that serves primarily as a revenue source, not a safety measure.

I urge you to pass HB1523 to make our streets more logical, more humane, and ultimately safer for everyone.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

COUNTY COUNCIL

Mel Rapozo, Chair
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair
Addison Bulosan
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.
Felicia Cowden
Fern Holland
Arryl Kaneshiro



Council Services Division
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawaii 96766

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

February 10, 2026

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL
ON**

HB 1523, RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE TRAFFIC CODE

House Committee on Transportation

Thursday, February 12, 2026

8:30 a.m.

Conference Room 430

Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Kila and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1523, Relating to the Statewide Traffic Code. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I wholeheartedly support HB 1523, which removes the requirement that pedestrians shall begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins or risk being fined one hundred thirty dollars (\$130.00). Stiff pedestrian fines such as these are much higher than many driving violations, such as speeding, which pose greater public safety concerns. Additionally, these pedestrian fines tend to disproportionately impact residents who rely on walking as a mode of transit.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1523. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

ADDISON BULOSAN
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

RM:ss

HB-1523

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 5:26:01 PM

Testimony for TRN on 2/12/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Edgardo Diaz Vega	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I fully support this bill, as expectations of what role pedestrians on our roadways must be on a more equal footing with the risks pedestrians pose to others. Pedestrians, unlike drivers, pose little risk to anyone other than themselves. Thus, we should expect pedestrians to use reason when crossing our roadways, not be held to strict standards on the correct way to walk.

Dear Chair Kila, Vice Chair Miyake, and members of the Committee,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am a Transportation Planner whose expertise is in walk, roll, bike, and transit. I am writing testimony in **strong support of HB1523**, which removes references to countdown timers as it relates to pedestrian-control signals, including the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins.

I am excited to see the legislature consider this bill because current statutes relating to pedestrians are needlessly restrictive and disproportionately impact people who do not drive and those who primarily rely upon walking as a means of transportation. These people are often low-income and walk out of necessity, as owning and operating a vehicle is prohibitively expensive.

Pedestrian enforcement and our current transportation system are not effective at improving pedestrian safety. Hawai'i road deaths hit an 18-year peak, with a spike in pedestrian and motorcycle deaths contributing to the more than 20% increase in deaths compared to 2024¹. If we truly care about improving pedestrian safety, we need to change the way we allocate our budgets to fund projects that improve pedestrian safety and design our transportation facilities to reduce vehicle speed. The Federal Highway Administration has a great resource that includes proven safety countermeasures that Hawai'i could implement to see a substantial decrease in pedestrian crashes, hospitalizations, and deaths.² Some examples include implementing pedestrian medians or refuges, road diets, leading pedestrian intervals, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure that will help to improve mobility justice and reduce the unnecessary pretextual stops, potential for escalation, and therefore incarceration and burden on the justice system. The State of Hawai'i must remove restrictive pedestrian laws from its criminal code and shift the responsibility of safety from people walking and rolling to systems, policies, planning and design. This will reduce traffic violence which has seen a dramatic recent increase, and prevent the disparate policing of people walking. There are proven safety countermeasures to improve pedestrian safety that the State and Counties may better spend our time, resources, and budget, including tax payer dollars, that will help to save lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo,
Kiana Otsuka

¹

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2026/01/2025-hawaii-road-deaths-hit-18-year-peak/#:~:text=The%20state's%202025%20road%20fatalities%20included%3A&text=38%20pedestrians,5%20other%20non%20occupant%20fatalities>

² [Proven Safety Countermeasures | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#)