



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, MANAGING DIRECTOR
HAWAII TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION
FEBRUARY 17, 2026**

HB 2022 RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION.

Aloha Chair Kila and members of the House Committee on Transportation. I am Tina Yamaki, Managing Director of the Hawaii Transportation Association and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Hawaii Transportation Association (HTA Hawaii) was founded in 1938 and incorporated in 1963, and is a private, non-profit trade organization dedicated to the service and assistance to the commercial ground transportation industry in the State of Hawaii. Our members include family owned small and medium sized businesses, independent owner operators, and national motor carriers range from delivery services to passenger carriers - as well as allied industry partners.

The HTA Hawaii respectfully opposes HB 2022. This measure specifies that the county annual vehicle registration fee is equal to the state annual motor vehicle registration fee.

While framed as a structural adjustment, this proposal would effectively increase the cost of vehicle registration for residents and businesses across the State and impose a disproportionate burden on working families, small businesses, and commercial transportation operators. It will have a disproportionate impact on those with a fixed income like our kūpuna, low-income workers, small business owners and our independent truck drivers.

Under existing law, state and county registration fees are separately structured. Counties retain discretion to set fees based on vehicle classifications, infrastructure needs, and fiscal conditions. This measure removes that flexibility by mandating fee parity with the state. By mandating fee parity, this bill would require counties to match the state fee level regardless of local budget considerations or economic conditions.

For example, if the state registration fee for a standard passenger vehicle is \$45, counties would be required to set their fee at \$45 as well. A vehicle owner currently paying \$45 (state) + \$30 (county) = \$75 annually could see that increase to \$90 annually. For households with multiple vehicles, this increase compounds quickly. A family with three registered vehicles could see an additional \$45 per year in recurring costs. For households with multiple vehicles, the impact compounds as 2 vehicles would be an additional \$30 annually; 3 vehicles would be an additional \$45 annually; and 4 vehicles would be an additional \$60 annually. In an environment where residents are already facing high housing, utility, insurance, and fuel costs, even modest annual increases have material impact.

Residents in Kauai County, Hawai'i County and Maui County rely heavily on personal vehicles due to limited public transportation infrastructure. Unlike Honolulu, where public transit options are more available, many rural communities have no viable alternatives. An increase in registration fees operates as a mobility surcharge on those who must drive to access employment; transport children; obtain medical care; and operate agricultural or rural businesses to name a few. This policy has the potential to disproportionately affect those with the fewest alternatives.

From a commercial transportation standpoint, HB 2022 presents a substantial operational cost increase. Commercial vehicles are often registered at higher weight classifications, meaning heavier vehicles already pay significantly more in registration fees. A mandated fee parity structure magnifies increases across fleet operations. For example, if registration increases by even \$20–\$40 per vehicle annually, that represents \$160–\$320 in additional recurring overhead for small local businesses with 8 work trucks. Mid-Sized Trucking Company with 25 commercial vehicles would see an increase of \$50 per vehicle that translates to \$1,250 annually in additional fixed costs. Delivery and Logistics Operators who have a fleet-based businesses operate

on tight margins. Registration increases add to cumulative burdens including rising diesel prices; insurance premium increases; parts and maintenance inflation; and compliance costs. These costs are not absorbed in isolation. They are passed through higher freight rates, delivery charges, and construction costs, ultimately affecting consumers statewide and making Hawaii even more expensive to live.

Furthermore, commercial operators in Hawai'i already face higher operating costs compared to mainland counterparts due to shipping, fuel, and regulatory expenses. Increasing registration costs raises barriers to entry for small owner-operators; reduces competitiveness of local trucking and logistics companies; and discourages fleet expansion or vehicle replacement investments. For independent CDL drivers and small fleet owners, every recurring fixed cost directly impacts viability.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

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SUBJECT: MOTOR VEHICLE, Set County Annual Vehicle Registration Fee Same as State

BILL NUMBER: HB 2022; SB 2894

INTRODUCED BY: HB by KILA; SB by LAMOSAO, San Buenaventura

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Specifies that the county annual vehicle registration fee is equal to the state annual motor vehicle registration fee.

SYNOPSIS: Amends section 249-31, HRS, to force the county annual registration fee to be equal to the state annual motor vehicle registration fee notwithstanding any county ordinance to the contrary.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon approval.

STAFF COMMENTS: This measure supplants the county's traditional authority to set by ordinance the annual motor vehicle registration fee.

Counties remain free to impose a vehicle weight tax under sections 249-2 and 249-13, HRS.

County vehicle taxes (except for bicycle fees) typically go into the county highway fund (section 249-18, HRS) and are used for road maintenance.

Digested: 2/12/2026