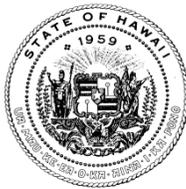


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



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

EDWIN H. SNIFFEN  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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

Tuesday, March 3, 2026  
2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, 308

## **HB2454, HD1 RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

### House Committee on Finance

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) supports House Bill 2454, H.D. 1 relating to the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. This measure represents an important step in strengthening the administration, accountability, and effectiveness of the SRTS program under section 291C-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS).

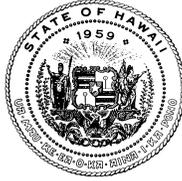
To ensure the HDOT is able to administer the SRTS program efficiently, we respectfully request to clarify the scope of the requirement for HDOT to expend funds in coordination with the SRTS advisory committee. This coordination requirement was repealed in a prior draft of this measure, but remains in H.B. 2454, H.D. 1, and would benefit from further clarification to support effective program implementation.

The HDOT requests that Section 2, Paragraph 9 be amended to read as follows:

“(h) The safe routes to school advisory committee shall notify the department of transportation of priority projects selected under section 291C-6(b)(3). The department of transportation shall expend funds from the safe routes to school program special fund in coordination with the safe routes to school advisory committee to be used for the implementation of the safe routes to school program, plan and projects pursuant to section 291C-6(b)(2) and (3), considering priority projects selected by the safe routes to school advisory committee along with any other projects that serve the purposes stated in subsection (a) and are within one mile of any school or place of learning. The department of transportation shall coordinate with counties as necessary and notify the safe routes to school advisory committee when safe routes to school program special funds are expended or transferred for priority projects selected by the safe routes to school advisory committee or other eligible projects. No later than twenty days prior to the convening of each regular session, each county shall submit to the legislature an annual report on the status and progress of its county safe routes to school program, including an accounting of all grants provided through the program and a timeline for future grant awards.

The HDOT remains committed to improving pedestrian and bicycle safety for children traveling to and from school. House Bill 2454, as amended above, will support expending SRTS program special funds most effectively and efficiently.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure, as amended.



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. 2454, H.D. 1  
RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TODD, CHAIR  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Hearing Date: March 03, 2026  
2:00 PM

Room Number: Conference Room 308  
via Videoconference

1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of  
2 Transportation (DOT) for fiscal implications of implementation.

3 **Department Position:** The DOH provides comments on the public health impacts of House Bill  
4 2454, House Draft 1 (H.B. 2454, H.D. 1) which requires the DOT to administer the Safe Routes to  
5 School (SRTS) program, amends the purposes for which funds of the SRTS Program Special Fund  
6 may be used, and establishes deadlines by which funds from the SRTS Program Special Fund  
7 that are allocated to counties must be obligated or expended by.

8 **Department Testimony:** The DOH has been an active participant on the SRTS Advisory  
9 Committee since its inception and initial meetings in 2024. Since then, the SRTS Advisory  
10 Committee has made significant progress on many of the mandated tasks including establishing  
11 transparent protocols and mechanisms to support county-level implementation of SRTS  
12 improvement projects with transportation equity at the forefront of consideration, identifying  
13 key and parameters and engaging in researching the best practices and benefits of SRTS  
14 programs. One key finding was the value of establishing and funding a network of county and  
15 state SRTS dedicated staff. Recommendations were developed for encumbering existing SRTS  
16 funds, a basic project evaluation matrix was developed and piloted, and recommendations

1 were made on the distribution of funds. Changes to streamline and facilitate efforts by  
2 communities to apply for and implement projects were also identified. Additional progress  
3 updates can be found in the SRTS Advisory Committee Annual Report to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Hawaii State  
4 Legislature.<sup>1</sup>

5 The DOH appreciates the restoration of the original statutory language of HRS 291C-3 to  
6 this measure to preserve the structure and function of the SRTS Advisory Committee to  
7 advance Hawaii’s SRTS and Vision Zero objectives, with representation from all counties, public  
8 health, and other key stakeholders.

9 **Offered Amendments:** None

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

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<sup>1</sup> Sniffen Director E, Ho’okele K, Hope N, et al. *STATE of HAWAII’I | KA MOKU’ĀINA ‘O HAWAII’I DEPARTMENT of TRANSPORTATION | KA ‘OIHANA ALAKAU 869 PUNCHBOWL STREET HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097*. Accessed February 11, 2026. <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HWY-S-25-2.45019-DOT-Report-for-Act-244-SLH-2023-Safe-Routes-to-School.pdf>

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES  
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE 'ŌHUA  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

711 KAPI'OLANI BOULEVARD, SUITE 1600 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
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RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



J. ROGER MORTON  
DIRECTOR  
PO'O

HONGLONG LI, Ph.D., P.E.  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O

TESTIMONY OF J. ROGER MORTON  
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
**Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 2:00 PM**  
**Conference RM 308 and Via Videoconference**

TO: Rep. Chris Todd, Chair, Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Finance

RE: COMMENTS ON HOUSE BILL 2454, H.D. 1, RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance. My name is J. Roger Morton, and I serve as the Director of the Department of Transportation Services (DTS) for the City and County of Honolulu (City).

DTS respectfully submits this testimony with comments on HB 2454, HD1, which proposes to clarify eligibility and improve accountability for the use of Safe Routes to School funds.

DTS is excited about the potential of the Safe Routes to School Fund to fill a critical funding gap for improving safety on county roadways near Oahu schools. The first round of funds will support new sidewalks, quick-build crossing improvements, Safe Routes to School Program expenses, lowering speed limits in school zones, and other efforts that will make it safer for our keiki to travel to and from school each day. Without this funding source, these investments will be seriously delayed or never come to fruition.

DTS notes, however, that while the HD1 proposes a 4-year deadline to expend all the funds once transferred to the county, DTS would request a longer timeline of six years and the option to request an extension on the deadline on a case-by-case basis, with the approval of the State Department of Transportation. With the 2-year requirement to obligate federal funds upon receipt of the state money, a very tight schedule remains for a larger construction project due to the budgeting and procurement processes (especially for federal-aid projects), which can take an additional one to two years, complicated legal agreements, the need for additional community outreach, or other unexpected reasons.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify with comments.



1001 Bishop Street #625 | Honolulu, HI 96813  
866-295-7282 | [aarp.org/hi](http://aarp.org/hi) | [hiaarp@aarp.org](mailto:hiaarp@aarp.org) |  
[Twitter.com/aarphawaii](https://twitter.com/aarphawaii) | [facebook.com/aarphawaii](https://facebook.com/aarphawaii)

**The State Legislature  
The House Committee on Finance  
Tuesday, March 3, 2026  
Conference Room 308, 2:00 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Chris Todd, Chair  
FROM: Keali'i S. López, State Director  
RE: **Opposition for H.B. 2454, HD1- RELATING TO SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

Aloha Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

I am Keali'i Lopez, State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan, social impact organization dedicated to empowering people fifty and older to choose how they live as they age. We advocate for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families: health and financial security, and personal fulfillment. On behalf of our 135,000 members in Hawai'i, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

AARP Hawai'i respectfully opposes HB2454 HD1, which would weaken key components of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) framework established under Act 244 (2023). Safe, walkable communities benefit not only children but also Hawai'i's kūpuna, many of whom regularly escort grandchildren to and from school or walk through the same neighborhoods. Strong SRTS programs improve pedestrian safety for all ages and help create age-friendly communities. AARP has the following concerns about HB 2454:

**1. Loss of Statewide Coordination**

The bill removes the SRTS Program Coordinator. This position is essential for statewide consistency, technical assistance, and inter-agency leadership—functions shown to support effective SRTS programs.

**2. Reduced Community Engagement**

HB2454 repeals language supporting community workshops and non-infrastructure activities. These elements ensure that projects reflect the real safety needs of local schools and neighborhoods and are central to successful SRTS implementation.

**3. Diminished Oversight and Transparency**

By eliminating the advisory committee's role in oversight and funding recommendations, HB2454 reduces accountability and removes community-informed guidance intended by Act 244.



**Page 2**

**H.B. 2454- Safe Routes to School**

**AARP Hawai'i – Oppose**

**4. Unclear Use of Funds**

The bill omits prior statutory language ensuring balance between infrastructure projects and education or public awareness activities that are vital to child safety and behavior change.

While strengthening accountability is important, HB2454, HD1 removes the very elements—coordination, community engagement, balanced activities, and transparent oversight—that make SRTS effective for keiki and kūpuna alike. AARP Hawai'i respectfully requests the Legislature to oppose HB2454 as currently drafted. A more balanced approach might include stronger financial oversight mechanisms without dismantling positions and community-based strategies that have been foundational to SRTS success in Hawai'i and elsewhere.



**Testimony for Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice**  
**Comments on HB2454 - Relating to Safe Routes to School**  
**House Committee on Finance (FIN)**  
**Tuesday, March 3rd, 2026 at 2:00PM**

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Dear Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the FIN committee,  
Mahalo for the opportunity to **respectfully OPPOSE HB2454 HD1**, which would amend the purposes for which funds of the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Special Fund may be used for and would establish deadlines for when funds from SRTS Special Fund that are allocated to the counties should be obligated or expended by.

**Importance of the Safe Routes to School Program**

There is an urgent need to improve the safety of vulnerable roadway users in Hawai'i. In 2024 alone, there were 102 traffic fatalities statewide and a staggering 42% of those fatalities involved pedestrians and bicyclists. Between 2015 and 2020, nearly 49% of pedestrian fatalities on O'ahu occurred on state-owned roadways. Pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries are also growing. The average annual number of statewide pedestrian fatalities rose by 26 percent during the 2014–2018 time period.

At the same time the Navahine agreement mandates that Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) complete its multimodal network within 5 years. This undertaking will require a significant investment, as the Hawai'i Climate Commission identified nearly \$1 billion in high-priority pedestrian, bicycle, and multimodal projects across the state that are currently unfunded.

The SRTS special fund is one of the only state funding sources dedicated to facilitating pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure, which is critical for improving roadway safety while also meeting the state's climate mandates. The SRTS program functions and responsibilities was last amended under Act 244 (2023), the purposes of which were to:

- 1) Enhance the SRTS program by developing strategies and facilitating transportation-related projects that will ensure that keiki are able to safely walk, bike, or roll to common destinations through the Vision Zero policy;
- 2) Establish a safe routes to school advisory committee of government and community stakeholders to advise the State in carrying out the purposes of the SRTS program;
- 3) Authorize the SRTS advisory committee to develop an applications process for projects under the safe routes to school program and determine awards for selected projects; and
- 4) Appropriate funds for priority projects that will improve safety and allow keiki and their families to safely walk, bike, or roll to school.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Paraphrased from [https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/slh/Years/SLH2023/SLH2023\\_Act244.pdf](https://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/slh/Years/SLH2023/SLH2023_Act244.pdf)

## **Concerns for Proposed Changes to the SRTS Program**

The current language included in HB2454 HD1 makes important improvements to the original bill proposal and preserves key components of the SRTS program.

However, that being said, we respectfully question what specific problem this measure is intended to solve at this time. The first round of SRTS projects was only approved in August 2025, and funds have already begun flowing to counties—including to the County of Kaua'i—as well as toward the procurement of a consultant to develop the statewide SRTS plan. In less than six months from project approval—and less than one year from the submission of the first legislative report—HDOT, the SRTS Advisory Committee, and county partners have moved swiftly to deploy funds and initiate planning and staffing efforts. By any reasonable measure, this represents early momentum and responsiveness.

We are concerned that significant statutory adjustments at this early stage risk disrupting a program that is still in its initial implementation phase and beginning to demonstrate results. Act 244 (2023) was not intended solely to result in discrete infrastructure projects. Rather, its purpose was to build long-term capacity to create a more transparent framework for prioritizing investments that improve how keiki travel to and from school. The SRTS model succeeds only when it includes comprehensive planning, community outreach, data collection, and coordination—alongside capital improvements.

In that context, we remain particularly concerned about ambiguity regarding the committee's role in approving the use of SRTS funds. Without clear statutory boundaries, the bill could create uncertainty about decision-making authority and could introduce administrative delays that slow project implementation.

If the goal is improved transparency and oversight, we respectfully suggest that clarity—not additional ambiguity—is what is needed. Clear delineation of roles between the Legislature, HDOT, and the SRTS Advisory Committee would strengthen accountability while preserving the program's operational efficiency.

SRTS is still in its formative stage, yet it has already demonstrated the ability to coordinate across agencies, move funding in partnership with counties, and advance both project implementation and statewide planning. We respectfully urge the committee to defer this measure and allow the SRTS program the time and stability necessary to fully realize the intent of Act 244 and build on its early success.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



## HIPHI Board

May Okihiro, MD, MS  
Chair  
John A. Burns School of Medicine,  
Department of Pediatrics

Jennifer José Lo, MD  
Vice Chair  
Hawai'i Health Partners

Titimaea Ta'ase, JD  
Secretary  
Taase Law Office

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Kaiser Permanente

Tammy Ho  
The Queen's Medical Center

Carissa Holley, MEd  
Hale Makua Health Services

Joyce Lee-Ibarra, MS  
JLI Consulting

Misty Pacheco, DrPH  
University of Hawai'i at Hilo

Dina Shek, JD  
Medical-Legal Partnership  
For Children in Hawai'i

JoAnn Tsark, MPH  
John A. Burns School of Medicine, Native  
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: March 2, 2026

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair  
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair  
Members of the House Committee on Finance

Re: Comments on HB 2454 HD1, Relating to Safe Routes to School

Hrg: March 3, 2026 at 2:00 PM in Conference Room 308

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Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)<sup>1</sup> and the Healthy Eating + Active Living<sup>2</sup> (HEAL) Statewide Coalition offers **comments on HB 2454 HD1**, which requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to administer the Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS), amends the purposes for which funds of the SRTS Special Fund may be used for, and establishes deadlines for when funds from SRTS Special Fund that are allocated to the counties should be obligated or expended by.

HIPHI appreciates the intent of the measure to ensure that the SRTS Program is administered and that the funds are spent in a timely and effective manner. However, we are concerned about the proposed language regarding the use of funds by the DOT and respectfully request the addition of SRTS Advisory Committee oversight and/or withdrawal limits.

## The SRTS Program Improves the Safety of Students

The intention of the SRTS Program is to:

- Enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school;
- Make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
- Facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.



### **Opportunity for Improved Efficiency and Timeliness**

We recognize the difficulty that the program has had in spending funds in a timely manner and appreciate the attempt to ensure this essential program is as effective as possible. We all hope for a SRTS program that allocates and spends funds without significant delays or bottlenecks. We look forward to working with the legislature to improve the process and the SRTS program.

### **SRTS Advisory Committee's Oversight for Special Funds Allocations**

The SRTS Advisory Committee provides much-needed insight and guidance to ensure programs and projects funded through this plan execute the intended vision of the program. Through the Committee's actions, funds have been successfully allocated for DOT and county projects in less than six months from approval and less than one year from the first report to the legislature.

### **Continuing the Work in all areas**

The funding of DOT staff labor and non-labor expenses, and the central services assessment required by section 36-27 is understandable. However, the proposed language in HB2454 HD1 gives the DOT full authority to expend funds from the SRTS Special Fund without the oversight of the SRTS Advisory Committee.

The processes and procedures the Committee has put into place as a result of Act 244 should be allowed to continue to provide oversight to the administration of the SRTS Special Fund, including expenditures incurred by the DOT. Adding this level of collaboration aligns with the original intent of ACT 244 and strengthens the SRTS Program at the state and county levels, ensuring the continued safety of our keiki.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your continued commitment to Hawaii's keiki.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patti Hatzistavrakis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Patti Hatzistavrakis  
Active Transportation Specialist



ADDRESS  
3442 Wai'ālae Ave., Suite 1  
Honolulu, HI 96816

PHONE  
808-735-5756

EMAIL  
bicycle@hbl.org

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Tuesday - March 3, 2026 - 2:00pm

**Hawai'i Bicycling League OPPOSES HB2454, HD1, with comments, Relating to Safe Routes to School**

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee,

My name is Eduardo Hernandez and I am the Advocacy Director of the Hawai'i Bicycling League (HBL). We are a non-profit organization founded in 1975 with the mission of enabling more people to ride bicycles for health, recreation, and transportation. We strive to create communities across our islands that have safe, accessible, and inclusive environments for people to bike, walk, and roll.

HBL **respectfully opposes HB2454, HD1 as drafted** which aims to amend [Act 244](#) which was enacted in July 2023 when the legislature sent HB 600, HD1, SD2, CD2 to the Governor. That year, HBL joined with dozens of government agencies, health care organizations, law enforcement, planning groups, and others to revamp a dormant Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. The legislature found then that it was “impractical to distribute SRTS special funds for program objectives on an annual basis because the SRTS program is a year-round program that requires regular collaboration between the State, counties, and community stakeholders to develop and implement programming and projects year-round.” The lack of a regular process and procedure has led to SRTS program special fund monies not being distributed, disrupting a previously reliable source of funding that communities and counties relied on for safe routes to school programming and project development.

While the legislature transferred this authority to the SRTS Advisory Committee based on broad support from the community, policymakers and key stakeholders in 2023, the Committee did not convene until 2024, when all members were finally seated. There simply has not been enough time to reasonably evaluate their effectiveness, nor make any substantive changes, as this bill proposes.

It is very unclear the proposed legislation could create more accountability. Act 244 was developed as a holistic response and involves more than just authority over funds. It is about building capacity, at the local level, including developing planning expertise and community outreach. We urge you to stay the course and learn more about the ways the SRTS Advisory Committee is engaging the community and ensuring that funds are appropriately spent. Shifting responsibilities as proposed in HB2454, HB1 will impede progress that has been made and demoralize everyone that worked so hard to get this program where it is today, poised to deliver on a community-led initiative for safer routes to schools.

We urge you to defer this bill at this time. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

**Eduardo Hernandez**  
Advocacy Director  
Hawai'i Bicycling League



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE  
Tuesday, March 3, 2026 — 2:00 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative respectfully opposes HB 2454 HD1, Relating to Safe Routes to School.**

Dear Chair Todd and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono respectfully opposes HB 2454 HD1**, which requires the Department of Transportation to administer the Safe Routes to School Program; amends the purposes for which funds of the SRTS Special Fund may be used for; establishes deadlines for when funds from SRTS Special Fund that are allocated to the counties should be obligated or expended by.

Following a year marked by historically high traffic fatalities and injuries, we need to strengthen — not weaken — our ability to meet keiki's transportation safety needs. The State's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program plays an important and uniquely positioned role in addressing these issues at the school level, and it is unclear whether the proposed legislation preserves that capacity.

While we appreciate the amendments included in HD1, our concerns remain regarding whether the bill preserves the governance structure and clear multimodal safety focus established under Act 244, SLH 2023.

When fully engaged and enabled, SRTS Programs:

- **Keeps our keiki safe.** Safe routes to school address traffic dangers and improves safety for students, resulting in a 44–75% decline in pedestrian injury in SRTS school zones.
- **Supports learning and attendance.** Studies suggest improved attendance rates of up to 2% at participating schools.

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*

- **Promotes health and physical activity.** Studies have shown an increase in walking and biking to school through safe routes to school and programs anywhere from 18% to 37%, depending on the projects implemented. For each year of SRTS Programs, walking and bicycling increase by 5% and keiki have higher levels of physical activity throughout the day.
- **Reduces transportation cost for families.** Safe routes to school provide low-cost options for students to get to and from school, reducing the amount of money needed for personal vehicle use and public school busing.
- **Helps all of us, from keiki to kūpuna, to stay safe and thrive.** Previous committee work estimated that 77% of all Hawai'i residents live within one mile of a school.<sup>1</sup>

Just years ago, Act 244 established the new framework for a Hawai'i safe routes to school program. It was enacted in direct response to “decades of automobile-centric planning and development have created formidable safety barriers for keiki and kūpuna on our roads, such as lack of complete, safe, and comfortable bicycle and pedestrian networks; burdensome and complicated funding mechanisms for safe routes to school programs and community engagement; absence of a state safe routes to school plan that creates performance measures, goals, strategies, and accountability; and limited coordinated safe routes to school promotion among state and county agencies and community-based organizations.” This important piece of legislation further directed the program “to prioritize the safety of keiki by fixing and simplifying the safe routes to schools (SRTS) program, re-engaging community stakeholders, and appropriating funds to move priority projects and save lives...”<sup>2</sup>

In response to this legislative mandate, the SRTS Advisory Committee has been working **diligently** since its authorized inception in July 2024, as documented in its annual reports to the Legislature.<sup>3</sup> The statute directs the State to develop a plan and create dedicated state and county capacity for focusing on community-centered, neighborhood-based transportation needs. To advance this work, the Advisory Committee has achieved the following:

- Approved funding for a consultant to help the Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) develop the full statewide program and plan that meets the requirements of Act 244 with goals, strategies, and metrics; recommendations for future community-based funding options, and identification of recommendations in the future.
- Pre-approved funding requests for SRTS coordinators to implement this work on the ground, including one scheduled for consideration late this month for the HDOT's SRTS coordinator position and one for Hawai'i Department of Education.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2026\\_accessible-v2.pdf](https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC_Annual_Report_2026_accessible-v2.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HWY-S-25-2.45019-DOT-Report-for-Act-244-SLH-2023-Safe-Routes-to-School.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HWY-S-25-2.45019-DOT-Report-for-Act-244-SLH-2023-Safe-Routes-to-School.pdf>  
[https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2026\\_accessible-v2.pdf](https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC_Annual_Report_2026_accessible-v2.pdf)

- Approved \$12 million in SRTS projects, funding permitting, across the state this past summer, serving over 5,600 students and their families.<sup>4</sup>

We appreciate the bill's aim to improve timely deployment of SRTS funds. That said, the existing structure of the SRTS Program and Advisory Committee was designed not only to move funds, but to build capacity, ensure meaningful community input, and provide transparency and accountability in how projects are identified and funded. The Advisory Committee has made great progress in building a formal mechanism for state-county collaboration and transparent reporting.

We remain concerned that, even as amended, this measure risks weakening the statutory guardrails and governance structure necessary to uphold the program's commitments to community, multimodal safety, and transparent oversight. For example:

- **Unclear eligible activities** — Act 244 was very clear about the investment in the SRTS program and system, including infrastructure and non-infrastructure work. Are funds eligible for this work by all government partners? What about the expansion to other community partners as desired in Act 244? Some of the existing work and recommendations by the Advisory Committee appear to be excluded from the list of authorizations, such as staffing at county levels, non-governmental organization partnerships/applications. In addition, the amended language does not clearly reaffirm that projects must primarily serve students walking, biking, or rolling to and from schools within a reasonable proximity, consistent with the intent of Act 244.
- **Deletion of the Committee's role with oversight and funding recommendation authority** — One of the key components of the original bill was to demonstrate transparency and accountability about these projects. Each one approved for funding was evaluated by Committee members for SRTS eligibility, funding match, equity concerns, local community support. These are only in place because the Advisory Committee prioritized them based on its understanding of legislative intent and the fuller framework. Even as amended, it is still not clear that authority is maintained at the same rigorous level. Will these criteria continue into the future?
- **Conflicts between project timeframes and desire for federal funding match** — Act 244 prioritizes using the SRTS fund as a federal funding match, whenever possible. Within that constraint, the timeframes may be overly restrictive, particularly for larger infrastructure projects. For example, one county won a federal discretionary grant for walkways serving several schools. The application occurred in August 2024, but only recently has the planning and project outreach been initiated.
- **Maintenance of the SRTS program without any resources** — It is our understanding that HDOT is in the process of procuring services to help develop the

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<sup>4</sup> [https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC\\_Annual\\_Report\\_2026\\_accessible-v2.pdf](https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/files/2026/01/SRTSAC_Annual_Report_2026_accessible-v2.pdf)



plan but also provide Advisory Committee support. As an all-volunteer committee, many of the members have stepped up to evaluate projects, draft the reports to legislature, draft and finalize minutes, but these are not sustainable as long-term activities. In the proposed version of HB 2454, it is not clear that these activities would be supported by HDOT or its consultant if the bill passes.

While we appreciate that the bill is considering much-needed, streamlined transportation projects, our concerns remain for ensuring that the State's SRTS efforts develop into a robust, community-driven program.

We respectfully urge the Committee to preserve the governance, coordination, multimodal safety focus, and accountability framework established in Act 244, SLH 2023, while pursuing appropriate efficiencies that do not undermine recent progress or program integrity.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and share our concerns.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Vice President of Government Affairs

**HB-2454-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:21:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Terri Yoshinaga     | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

I support this bill.

**HB-2454-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:15:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Heide Kil           | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha

Heide Kila resident of the Westside. With all the tragedy on our roads. As a mother of a high schooler I am in support of this bill. I want to make the Roads safer

Mahalo

Heide Kila

**HB-2454-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:31:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>            |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Leslie Gohier       | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony<br>Only |

Comments:

Aloha

i am a Kupuna from the westside and seen many things. But i don't recall how unsafe the roads are lately.

So I am in SUPPORT of this bill! I want to make my community a safer place for our keiki.

Mahalo

Lealie Gohier

**HB-2454-HD-1**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:46:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/3/2026 2:00:00 PM

| <b>Submitted By</b> | <b>Organization</b> | <b>Testifier Position</b> | <b>Testify</b>         |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Ted Meehan          | Individual          | Support                   | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support this important bill. Thank you.

Ted Meehan