

**DEPARTMENT OF CUSTOMER SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE KUPA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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February 2, 2026

The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Chair
The Honorable Stanley Chang, Vice Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs
State Capitol, Conference Room 224
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs:

SUBJECT: S.B. No. 2079 - Relating To Vehicle Titles
HEARING: Tuesday, February 3, 2026, 3:01 p.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD) **opposes** this bill and appreciates the opportunity to offer comments for your committee's consideration. Pursuant to Section 6-402 of the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu, CSD Division of Motor Vehicle (DMV) administers the motor vehicle registration program for the island of O'ahu. While CSD DMV understands the intent of this measure is to provide relief to individuals who possess vehicles without standard title documentation, we have significant concerns regarding the bill's legal, operational, and public safety implications.

S.B. No. 2079 would require the county Director of Finance to issue a temporary, three-year certificate of title based on an affidavit of ownership, limited documentation, and the posting of a surety bond. While the bill includes safeguards such as a bond requirement and a waiting period prior to conversion to a full title, the proposed framework shifts critical determinations of ownership away from documented chain-of-title requirements that currently protect vehicle owners, lienholders, and the public.

From an administrative perspective, the bill places the Director of Finance and county DMV offices in the position of adjudicating disputed or unclear ownership claims

without sufficient investigatory or legal authority and resources to verify competing interests. DMV operations are designed to process transactions supported by clear statutory documentation—not to resolve ownership disputes that may involve fraud, theft, civil claims, or unresolved liens. The bill would expose county agencies to increased legal risk, inconsistent outcomes, and potential challenges from prior owners or lienholders.

CSD DMV is also concerned that the proposed temporary title process could be vulnerable to abuse. Reliance on affidavits and possession-based claims, even when paired with a surety bond, creates opportunities for fraudulent or improper titling of vehicles. Once a temporary title is issued, downstream impacts may include improper registration, insurance coverage complications, enforcement challenges, and confusion for subsequent purchasers who may rely on the apparent legitimacy of a county-issued title.

Operationally, implementation of this bill would require new procedures, staff training, legal review, coordination with law enforcement, and ongoing tracking of temporary titles and bond expiration dates. These additional responsibilities would significantly increase workload for DMV offices without identified funding, staffing, or system support.

CSD DMV also notes that existing statutes already provide mechanisms to address many title-related issues while preserving mutual attestation, accountability, and clear ownership standards. CSD DMV has been actively engaged with legislators on targeted solutions that balance relief for good-faith parties with protections against fraud and unintended liability.

For these reasons, CSD DMV respectfully opposes S.B. No. 2079 and encourages continued dialogue to explore alternative approaches that maintain the integrity of Hawai'i's vehicle title system while addressing legitimate hardship cases in a more narrowly tailored and administratively feasible manner.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on S.B. No. 2079.

Sincerely,

for Kimberly M. Hashiro
Director

LATE

SB-2079

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:24:04 PM
Testimony for EIG on 2/3/2026 3:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Melody Rosas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Melody Rosas, and I am a resident of Hawai‘i and a University of Hawai‘i student studying natural resources and environmental management. I am writing in strong support of SB2079 HD1.

SB 2079 takes a significant step in safeguarding our marine ecosystems by penalizing knowingly capturing, killing, abusing, or entangling sharks, as well as strengthening existing protections for manta rays by covering all rays. Sharks and rays are key species that play a vital role in maintaining a healthy reef system. Removing them from our ecosystem will have a significant effect on our ocean’s balance.

Since living in Hawai‘i, I have come to appreciate how sharks and rays are part of what make our ocean unique and alive. They are not creatures that need to be controlled or removed from our ecosystem. They are part of what make our ocean thrive. They are essential parts of our ocean’s ecosystem that need legal protection from intentional harm.

Penalizing these actions as a misdemeanor while allowing reasonable exceptions balances our desire to protect our ocean with reality. It solidifies our reputation as leaders in ocean conservation. It’s a step that aligns with mālama kai, a Hawaiian concept that means “ocean care.”

With that said, I respectfully ask that you pass SB 2079 HD1. Mahalo for allowing me to give my testimony today.