

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

**Testimony of
LEAH LARAMEE
Climate Change Coordinator on behalf of
Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission
Co-Chair Ryan K. P. Kanaka'ole**

**Before the Senate Committee on
LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY**

**Wednesday, February 11, 2026
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2993
RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**

Senate Bill 2993 requires and appropriates funds for the Department of Human Resources Development to offer fully subsidized public transit passes for state employees, **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure.**

The Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 departments, committees, and counties with the purpose of promoting ambitious, climate-neutral, culturally responsive strategies for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization's (OMPO) 2025 *Hawai'i State Government Transportation Demand Management Plan* identified employee transportation benefits as a top mechanism to drive down greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, save employees money, improve quality of life and health, improve the efficiency of the State's parking and office facilities, and address the State's staffing crisis. With more than 47,000 employees, the State has a significant opportunity to shift individuals out of single occupancy vehicles and build public support for future investments in sustainable transportation.

Of the 3,537 state employees that responded to OMPO's transportation demand survey, sixty nine percent indicated that they arrive to work by driving alone. Free public transportation could encourage a significant shift from private vehicle use to mass transit, leading to substantial environmental and individual benefits. This could also reduce the number of cars on the road, which helps alleviate traffic congestion, a major contributor to urban air pollution and GHG emissions. Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

Committee on Labor and Technology

February 11, 2026 at 3:00PM

Conference Room 225

SB 2993

Relating to Transportation

Dear Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports SB 2993**, which would require and appropriate funds for the Department of Human Resources Development to offer fully subsidized public transit passes for state employees.

This bill is aligned with the high priority recommendations¹ identified in the State Government Employee Transportation Demand Management Study, which OahuMPO conducted in partnership with the Hawaii State Energy Office, and in collaboration with the Department of Human Resources Development and the Department of Accounting and General Services.

As part of the Study, the OahuMPO conducted an employee survey, employee focus groups, an origin-destination analysis, and other spatial analyses to understand what employee transportation challenges are, and to identify potential opportunities. Challenges include high drive alone commute rates, highly subsidized employee parking, but no subsidy for employees walking, rolling, biking, using transit, carpooling, and vanpooling. Opportunities include high employee interest in changing commute modes if incentivized, with many State employees living close to their offices, living near other State employees, and many employees making zero stops on their way to and from work.

Part of this study also included developing cost estimates for the implementation of fully subsidized transit passes for state employees, which can be made available to legislators upon request.

More information about the study and its findings can be viewed on the study website: <https://engage.oahumpo.org/transportation-demand-management-tdm-study>

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning

¹ https://oahumpo.org/?wpfb_dl=3428 (starting on page 50)

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](#)).

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.² Providing more robust and equitable employee transportation benefits can help more employees save on their transportation costs, reduce transportation emissions and traffic congestion, and improve employee transportation choices.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure. We'd be happy to answer any questions about the Study.

² https://oahumpo.org/?wpfb_dl=2215



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

**Testimony in SUPPORT of S.B. 2993
RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**

SENATOR BRANDON J.C. ELEFANTE, CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Hearing Date: February 11, 2026
3:00 PM

Room Number: Conference Room 225
and Videoconference

- 1 **Fiscal Implications:** The Department of Health (DOH) defers to the Department of Human
- 2 Resource Development (DHRD) for fiscal implications of implementation.
- 3 **Department Position:** The DOH supports Senate Bill 2993 (S.B. 2993) and defers to the DHRD
- 4 for fiscal implications and their priorities and those of the Executive Supplemental Budget.
- 5 S.B. 2993 requires and appropriates funds for the DHRD to offer fully subsidized public transit
- 6 passes for state employees.
- 7 **Department Testimony:** Despite Hawaii's favorable climate, geography, and reputation for
- 8 active outdoor living, only 33% of adult Hawaii residents, in 2023, met federal guidelines for
- 9 physical activity.¹ Most transit-based commutes incorporate walking or cycling to and from
- 10 transit stops, helping employees meet recommended physical activity levels; research indicates
- 11 that transit users are nearly four times more likely to meet daily physical activity
- 12 recommendations compared to non-users, significantly reducing risks of obesity, type 2
- 13 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Through this pilot program to fully subsidized public

¹ Hawaii Health Data Warehouse, Hawaii State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2023.

1 transit passes, the State will incentivize and proactively advance an active transportation
2 framework that integrates physical activity into the daily routines of the public workforce.

3 Current data from the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization’s 2024 focus groups
4 reveals a significant latent demand for this shift, with 54% of state employees reporting they
5 would ride public transit if passes were fully subsidized.² This measure also addresses a critical
6 policy imbalance: the State currently provides an indirect parking subsidy for downtown
7 Honolulu stalls valued between \$130 and \$238 per month, while offering no equivalent subsidy
8 for transit or active modes. Successful models in municipalities like Philadelphia³ and
9 Pittsburgh⁴, as well as the State of Washington⁵, have demonstrated that such programs can
10 increase transit trips among employees by up to 40% and are highly effective in reducing solo
11 driving.

12 This measure supports Hawaii’s commitment to Vision Zero by incentivizing a shift away
13 from single-occupancy vehicles, which reduces total vehicle miles traveled and road congestion.
14 Promoting transit through this pilot program would allow employees to model healthy behavior
15 and add to the incremental steps towards building pedestrian friendly built environments.

16 **Offered Amendments:** None

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

² Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization. State Employee Transportation Demand Management Study: 2024 Focus Group Findings. Honolulu, HI: OahuMPO; 2024. <https://engage.oahumpo.org/transportation-demand-management-tdm-study>

³ City of Philadelphia. City workers ride SEPTA for free extension. Published May 28, 2025. Accessed February 1, 2026. <https://www.phila.gov/2025-05-28-city-workers-still-ride-septa-for-free/>

⁴ Pittsburgh Regional Transit. Bulk Pass Pilot Summary and Next Steps. Pittsburgh, PA: PRT; 2024. <https://www.rideprt.org/bulkpilot>

⁵ Washington State Department of Transportation. 2025 Transportation Mobility Report. Olympia, WA: WSDOT; 2025. <https://wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2025-12/2025Mobility-Report-PublicTransportation.pdf>



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

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

BRIAN K. FURUTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMŌHALA LIMAHANA
235 S. BERETANIA STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

Statement of
BRENN A H. HASHIMOTO
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY
Wednesday, February 11, 2026
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225

In consideration of
SB2993, RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and the members of the committee:

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) offers the following comments for SB2993.

The purpose of SB2993 is to require and appropriate funds for HRD to offer fully subsidized transit passes for all state employees by adding a new section to chapter 76, HRS, to allow for subsidized public transit passes for state employees that would require:

- HRD, in coordination with each county's transportation agency or department, to offer fully subsidized public transit passes as a benefit option for all state employees; and
- Integrate the public transit passes into employee badges in accordance with existing transit pass badging programs.

Our comments with the specific approach suggested by this bill, in its current form, are as follows:

- Although the bill would require HRD to subsidize transit passes for all state employees, only the executive branch departments (excluding the Department of Education, the University of Hawai'i, and the Hawaii Health System Corporation) are under the purview of HRD. HRD does not have jurisdiction over the aforementioned agencies, as well as the State Judiciary and Legislative branches, accordingly, we

do not have employee data from those jurisdictions. All cost analysis below is based on data from the personnel system of HRD, Department of Education, the University of Hawai'i and Hawai'i Health Systems Corporation as reported in the June 30, 2025, Workforce Profile report.

- Currently, mass transit passes for O'ahu employees are funded by employee payroll contributions that have the benefit of being deducted on a pre-tax basis through the State's pre-tax transportation benefit pilot program (PTBP) authorized under section 132(f) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended. A subsidized program providing full coverage would be at no cost to the employee and so would have to be funded by the employer.

Based upon data as of June 30, 2025, there were 284 employees participating in the bus pass program. If the passes were to be fully subsidized by the State for those participants at today's monthly bus pass rate, the annual cost would be \$272,640 (284 participants x \$80/month x 12 months). The City Council has voted to increase the monthly bus pass fare to \$90, effective July 1, 2026.

Based on the new fare schedule, if we were to offer fully subsidized passes to approximately fifty-four percent (based upon the focus group study) of the 48,226 employees (Workforce Profile data as of June 30, 2025), the cost would be approximately \$25 million annually.

Effective as of July 1, 2026, HRD will be implementing enhancements to the PTBP to allow executive branch employees under the purview of HRD, the opportunity to set aside up to \$340 per month for eligible transit-related expenses (i.e., bus, rail, and vanpool) and up to \$340 per month for work-related parking expenses. The significant changes to the PTBP Program will provide employees with the ability to purchase:

- Monthly bus passes for the neighbor island bus system rather than only on O'ahu (i.e., TheBus).
 - A seat in a commuter highway vehicle between the employee's home and worksite (i.e., vanpool).
 - Monthly parking fees in parking facilities outside of DAGS-managed lots (e.g., private lots) near their place of work.
- The cost of having the transit passes integrated into employee badges in accordance with existing transit pass badging programs is currently unknown. However, if implemented, at the very least, it would require each department to be equipped with a badging system software, equipment, and a supply of blank ID cards.
 - To develop and implement a subsidized program will require staff resources to research other state programs to determine what is fair and equitable to all state employees, thoroughly review federal and state laws, rules, and regulations to

determine taxability of financial incentives, develop program guidelines, create marketing materials, meet and/or negotiate with the various transportation companies for a reduced cost, etc. As such, we believe that at the onset, one Human Resources Specialist V position would be needed to develop the program. As the program evolves, additional resource costs including personnel and equipment may be needed.

While HRD appreciates the intent to reduce vehicle miles traveled by commuters to meet the State's decarbonizing goals and increase recruitment and retention of state employees by subsidizing transit passes, we are concerned with the fiscal impact it will have on state finances and the long-term sustainability of the program.

We are available to answer any questions or provide further information if needed.



**Testimony for Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Support for SB2993 - Relating to Transportation Demand Management
Senate Committee on Labor and Technology (LBT)
February 11, 2026 at 3PM**

Dear Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the LBT committee,
Mahalo for the opportunity to express **STRONG SUPPORT for SB2993** which would require the Departments of Human Resources Development to offer fully subsidized public transit passes for state employees.

Hawai'i Appleseed is advocating for SB2993 as we believe that the measure would:

- 1. Reduce household transportation costs.** SB2993 would greatly reduce transportation costs for the State employees who currently rely on public transit to travel to/from work. Currently, transit passes for riders on O'ahu are \$3.00 for a single fare, \$7.50 for a day pass, or \$80 for a monthly pass. These costs may discourage families and individuals who own a personal vehicle (or use a different mobility option, such as a Biki membership) from also purchasing a transit pass for commuting purposes. Conversely, fully subsidized public transit passes could entice state employees to substitute public transit for personal vehicle use, which will allow them to reduce spending on parking, gas, and vehicle maintenance. By decreasing an employee's transportation costs, they can reallocate resources towards other essential needs such as housing, education, and healthcare.

- 2. Decrease reliance on single occupancy vehicles and encourage multimodal travel.** For the State to meet its climate and energy goals, emissions from the ground transportation sector must be reduced. This will require reducing reliance on single occupancy vehicles and increasing multimodal transportation, such as walking, biking, and taking transit. The O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (O'ahuMPO) recently completed the *Hawai'i State Government Transportation Demand Management Plan*, which included an employee survey, employee focus groups, an origin-destination analysis, and other spatial analyses to identify ways to change commuting behavior for state employees. The plan identified fully subsidized transit passes as a high impact strategy to reduce vehicle travel among state workers.¹

¹ O'ahuMPO, "Final Report Hawai'i State Government Transportation Demand Management Plan," June, 2025. https://hdp-us-prod-app-oahumpo-engage-files.s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/9317/5400/9163/Hawaii_State_Government_Employee_TDM_Study_Final_Report.pdf.

- 3. Increased transportation efficiency and public spending.** Investing in public transit infrastructure and subsidizing fares for employees may require initial financial resources, but the long-term benefits far outweigh the costs. By encouraging the use of public transit, the state can reduce the need for expensive road maintenance, alleviate traffic congestion, and improve overall transportation efficiency.

In short, providing fully subsidized public transit passes to state employees, as SB2993 would do, is a crucial step to advance the state's climate and energy goals. It will also help ensure that our state workers have access to safe and affordable mobility options.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



Abbey Seitz

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice
Director of Transportation Equity



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA

THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY

Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Chair
Senator Rachele Lamosao, Vice Chair

Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 3:00 PM
Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

Re: Testimony on SB2993 – RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO (“UPW”) is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties.

UPW supports SB2993, which requires and appropriates funds for the Department of Human Resources Development (“DHRD”) to offer fully subsidized public transit passes for state employees.

As stated in the bill, the State currently provides limited transit benefits for its employees, which include pre-tax payroll deductions to purchase transit passes or pay for parking, as well as an indirect subsidy for those employees who are fortunate to secure a parking stall in a State-managed lot within Honolulu’s civic center. However, these transit benefits are Oahu-centric and only apply to executive branch employees.

We believe this is an opportunity to extend transit pass benefits to our members statewide. UPW is currently unaware of how many of our members currently utilize public transit to report to work, but we sense that the offer of fully subsidized public transit passes would result in greater utilization.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

HEADQUARTERS

1426 North School Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-1914
Phone 808.847.2631

HAWAII

362 East Lanikaula Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4336
Phone 808.961.3424

KAUAI

2970 Kele Street, Suite 213
Lihue, Hawaii 96766-1803
Phone 808.245.2412

MAUI

841 Kolu Street
Wailuku, Hawaii 96793-1436
Phone 808.244.0815

1.866.454.4166

Toll Free - Molokai/Lanai only



To: Senate Committee on Labor and Technology (LBT)
From: Sherry Pollack, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 3pm

In strong support of SB2993

Aloha Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Committee members,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of SB2993** that would require and appropriate funds for the Department of Human Resources Development to offer fully subsidized public transit passes for state employees.

The climate crisis is not a future threat but a present reality. In 2021, Hawaii became the first state in the nation to officially declare a climate emergency, calling for an immediate, just transition and emergency mobilization effort to reduce carbon pollution and restore a safe climate.

In Hawaii, transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions; with ground transportation making up 38% of transportation emissions in the State. In 2024, the Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) reached an unprecedented settlement in *Navahine v. HDOT*, with a commitment to protect children's constitutional rights to a life-sustaining climate system and to preserve Hawaii's public trust resources for present and future generations. As part of this commitment, the state is required to achieve a zero-emissions transportation system by 2045.

The settlement requires steps be taken to achieve the state's decarbonization goals. Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by commuters was identified as a key strategy to reduce carbon pollution and achieve this objective. Promoting the use of public transit is an effective, common-sense approach to reduce VMT.

Encouraging a shift from private vehicles to public transportation directly supports state decarbonization goals. Evidence shows that when transit passes are subsidized or made free, employees are significantly more likely to choose public transportation. SB2993 would encourage the use of public transit, while reducing both personal commuting costs and environmental impact.

The state already subsidizes parking for its employees. Policies that result in replacing car trips with public transit not only benefit employees, they benefit all of us by the reduction in traffic congestion and carbon pollution.

We are in a climate emergency. We need to act like it. To protect our climate and future, we need ambitious efforts like SB2993. We urge you to PASS this important legislation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Labor and Technology

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 11, 2026

S.B. 2993 — RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports S.B. 2993, which requires and appropriates funds for the Department of Human Resources Development to offer fully subsidized public transit passes for state employees.

Our organization recognizes that our state must explore new and alternative ways to recruit and retain a qualified workforce, especially at a time when government salary alone may not be enough to be considered an attractive career. We appreciate the intent of this measure as it aims to look at an opportunity to reduce transportation cost, which can be a unique public sector employee benefit to reduce vacancy rates and increase employee retention.

We trust that many employees utilize public transportation, and we anticipate that more employees will use public transportation once the final phase of the Honolulu Skyline project is completed as many departments have large offices near the final two stops of the project. Furthermore, this benefit, if implemented, would help the state remain competitive with the City and County of Honolulu as they already offer this benefit to all city employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of on S.B. 2993.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

SB-2993

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 7:37:54 PM

Testimony for LBT on 2/11/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jason Espero	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice-Chair, and Honorable Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support** of SB 2993. I am a State employee and here are my reasons I support this bill:

1. Saves money for State employees - I drive to my office in Downtown 2x/wk. Each time I have to pay about \$20/day for parking at Alii Place. The other 3 days, I take Skyline/Bus which costs me about \$6/day. Subsidizing transit passes would help me keep more of my income and reduce out-of-pocket commuting costs.

2. Reduces long waitlist for parking - My colleague waited over 10 years to get a monthly parking permit. A fully subsidized public transit pass would give employees a dependable alternative while easing pressure on scarce parking resources.

3. Improves Quality of Life and Supports Recruitment/Retention

Access to reliable transit benefits makes commuting easier and more predictable. This can improve quality of life, support employee retention, and make state employment more attractive—particularly for younger workers and those on tighter budgets who may not be able to absorb high parking costs.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to pass SB 2993.

Mahalo,
Jason Espero

LATE

Dear Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Committee Members,

My name is Kiana Otsuka and I am a state employee who uses transit to get to work. I am writing in **support of SB 2993**, which requires and appropriates funds for the Department of Human Resources Development to offer fully subsidized public transit passes for state employees.

I've been a long-time transit rider, and have either paid for my transit fare via the pre-tax option, or have paid out of pocket. Last year, I spent more than \$450 on transit fares to get to/from work. On the other hand, I could choose to drive my car to downtown Honolulu, and pay \$25/month for parking at a state lot. Driving is much more convenient and much quicker for me (1 hour on two different buses vs. 15-20 minutes to drive), but I choose to ride transit because it's important to me to reduce my greenhouse gas emissions and not contribute further to traffic.

My commuting costs are a huge expense for me, and with transit fares expected to increase this summer, it will become a larger portion of my expenses. We should be rewarding state employees who choose commute modes that are less impactful to our traffic congestion and environment. This is why I feel it's important to provide fully subsidized transit passes to all state employees.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Mahalo,

Kiana Otsuka