
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that ground
2 transportation makes up thirty-eight per cent of transportation
3 emissions in the State and light-duty vehicles make up eighty-
4 five per cent of those emissions. The legislature recognizes
5 that reducing vehicle miles traveled by commuters will be a key
6 component to meeting the State's decarbonization goals and legal
7 requirements outlined in the settlement agreement for *Navahine*
8 *F. v. Hawaii Department of Transportation*, which can be achieved
9 by promoting the use of public transit.

10 The legislature further finds that state employees have
11 limited commuter benefits. In 2024, the house of
12 representatives adopted H.R. No. 191 (2024), which urged the
13 department of accounting and general services and department of
14 human resources development to evaluate subsidizing public
15 transit for public employees. Currently, the only
16 transportation benefit the State offers is a pre-tax deduction
17 of a state employee's paycheck to purchase a transit pass or pay



1 for parking as allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. The
2 State indirectly subsidizes employee parking stalls in downtown
3 Honolulu on average between \$130 to \$238 a month, and provides
4 no subsidy for employees using public transit, carpooling,
5 walking, biking, and other modes of transportation that reduce
6 transportation emissions.

7 The legislature also finds that opting for public transit
8 and active modes of transportation over private vehicles for
9 commutes can help employees save money on fuel, insurance,
10 parking, and vehicle maintenance costs, which can also help
11 reduce the cost of living. Additionally, active modes of
12 transportation can enhance quality of life, health, and
13 wellbeing through physical activity.

14 The legislature also finds that state employee focus groups
15 conducted in July and August of 2024 by the Oahu metropolitan
16 planning organization revealed that fifty-four per cent of
17 respondents would ride public transit to work if public transit
18 passes were fully subsidized or discounted and forty-eight per
19 cent of respondents stated they would walk, ride a bike, or
20 scooter to work with a financial incentive.



1 The legislature notes that other jurisdictions such as
2 Redmond, Washington and Nashville, Tennessee have successfully
3 implemented free public transportation options for government
4 employees. These jurisdictions have also reported increased
5 employee retention and decreased tardiness or absences upon
6 participating in the commuter benefits program.

7 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require and
8 appropriate funds for the department of human resources
9 development to offer fully subsidized transit passes for all
10 state employees.

11 SECTION 2. Chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
12 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
13 read as follows:

14 "§76- Subsidized public transit passes; state
15 employees. The department of human resources development shall,
16 in coordination with each county's transportation agency or
17 department, offer fully subsidized public transit passes as a
18 benefit option for all state employees. The public transit
19 passes shall be integrated into employee badges in accordance
20 with existing transit pass badging programs."



1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to
4 offer fully subsidized public transit passes as a benefit option
5 for all state employees.

6 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
7 human resources development for the purposes of this Act.

8 SECTION 4. New statutory material is underscored.

9 SECTION 5. This Act shall take effect on January 1, 2077.

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Report Title:

DHRD; Public Transit Passes; State Employees

Description:

Requires and appropriates funds for the Department of Human Resources Development to offer fully subsidized public transit passes for state employees. Effective 1/1/2077. (SD1)

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