

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 2994

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 06 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2697  
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Judiciary, to which was referred S.B. No. 2697, S.D. 1, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Prohibit vehicles from driving on the shoulder of a roadway, except in certain circumstances;
- (2) Authorize the Department of Transportation and county police departments to impound or cause to tow vehicles with expired registrations of three years or more after verifying the vehicle's registration status;
- (3) Allow the owner of an impounded or towed vehicle to recover the vehicle under certain conditions;
- (4) Exempt an owner of an impounded or towed vehicle from liability for any towing or storage charges if the vehicle was improperly impounded or towed;
- (5) Allow the owner of an impounded or towed vehicles to recover the vehicle without payment upon presenting the vehicle's current registration to the towing company;



- (6) Require a towing company to allow a vehicle owner to enter the vehicle to obtain the vehicle's current registration;
- (7) Require an annual report to the Legislature;
- (8) Increase the fine amount for owners of out-of-state motor vehicles who fail to register in the State; and
- (9) Establish minimum and maximum statutory penalties for violations relating to the use of high occupancy vehicle lanes.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Department of Transportation and one individual.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Department of the Attorney General, Department of Customer Services of the City and County of Honolulu, and one individual.

Your Committee finds that multiple vehicular issues threaten the public welfare and safety on state roads. First, any vehicular traffic on the shoulders of roadways risks harm to pedestrians and obstructs the passage of emergency vehicles. Second, abandoned vehicles encumber the regular and safe vehicular traffic along state roadways. Third, owners of out-of-state vehicles frequently neglect to register their vehicles in the State, withholding contributions toward the maintenance of state infrastructure. Your Committee notes that existing law does not authorize the Department of Transportation to impound or dispose of certain abandoned vehicles, nor does it impose sufficient fines to deter the unsafe conduct of driving on roadway shoulders or the failure by out-of-state drivers to obtain in-state registration. This measure will improve the safety, efficiency, and maintenance of the State's roadways.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Judiciary that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2697, S.D. 1, and recommends that it pass Third Reading.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Judiciary,



---

KARL RHOADS, Chair



The Senate  
Thirty-Third Legislature  
State of Hawai'i

Record of Votes  
Committee on Judiciary  
JDC

Bill / Resolution No.:*	Committee Referral:	Date:		
SB 2697 SDI	TRS - JDC	3/3/26		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure. If so, then the previous decision was to: _____				
The Recommendation is:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pass, unamended 2312 <input type="checkbox"/> Pass, with amendments 2311 <input type="checkbox"/> Hold 2310 <input type="checkbox"/> Recommit 2313				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
RHOADS, Karl (C)	✓			
GABBARD, Mike (VC)	✓			
CHANG, Stanley	✓			
SAN BUENAVENTURA, Joy A.			✓	
AWA, Brenton			✓	
<b>TOTAL</b>	3	—	2	—
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
				
Distribution:				
Original	Yellow	Pink		
File with Committee Report	Committee	Drafting Agency		

\*Only one measure per Record of Votes