



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

March 17, 2026  
3:00 PM  
State Capitol, 229

**HB1696, HD2**  
**RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES.**

Senate on Transportation

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) supports H.B. 1696, H.D. 2, which seeks to lower the minimum age for obtaining a commercial driver's license in Hawaii from twenty-one to eighteen.

This legislation aligns with federal standards and enhances the State's ability to meet workforce demands in the commercial transportation sector. Under subsection (i) of Section 286-236, the bill allows individuals aged eighteen or older but under twenty-one to obtain a commercial driver's license with the "K" restriction, limiting operation to intrastate commerce. This provision ensures that younger drivers are not permitted to engage in interstate commerce, maintaining compliance with federal regulations while expanding the pool of qualified drivers within the state.

Additionally, the bill removes the previous requirement that applicants must only operate category 3 vehicles to qualify for a commercial license. As stated in Section 286-102.3, this change permits eighteen-year-olds to drive all categories of commercial motor vehicles, provided they meet the qualifications outlined in 49 CFR parts 390–396, subpart B, and other applicable federal and state requirements. This modification recognizes the evolving needs of the industry and supports increased flexibility in hiring and training young drivers.

Furthermore, the imposition of requirements in the proposed section §286-236(i)(3) may create unnecessary conflicts with Federal regulations regarding commercial driver's licenses. Beginning February 7, 2022, all individuals seeking a commercial driver's license are required to complete entry-level driver training as part of the requirements to obtain the driving credentials specified in 49 CFR part 380, subpart F. This ensures that all commercial drivers, regardless of age, receive standardized, comprehensive training aligned with national safety standards. Our Federal partners have specific requirements for drivers and motor carriers and any hours requirements for individuals who seek this proposed credential may result in additional recordkeeping for businesses subject to Federal and state regulations for motor carriers that employ individuals with the

proposed credential. Moreover, the DOT also is concerned that this requirement will impact small and family-owned businesses, as the hours requirement may be found burdensome for those businesses who have their children drive commercially in order to transport goods, handle agricultural duties, etc.

Moreover, the bill mandates that the DOT adopt or amend rules to implement the reduction in the minimum age for a commercial driver's license, ensuring regulatory consistency and clarity for both applicants and licensing officials.

We appreciate the thoughtful approach taken in balancing public safety with workforce needs. By allowing eighteen-year-olds to obtain intrastate commercial licenses under strict conditions—including no hazardous materials transport, no interstate operation, and adherence to all federal and state safety protocols—the bill promotes responsible expansion of the commercial driving workforce without compromising road safety.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

March 17, 2026

To: The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair,  
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation

Date: Tuesday, March 17, 2026  
Time: 3:00 p.m.  
Place: Conference Room 229, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

**Re: H.B. 1696 HD2 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES**

The **DLIR supports the intent** of this measure to reduce the age requirement for driving commercially in the State to eighteen years of age provided that there is a sufficient number of examiners to administer the required Commercial Driver's License (CDL) driving test.

This measure lowers the minimum age for individuals who may drive commercially within the State from nineteen to eighteen, provided that any driver is limited to intrastate commerce, has the requisite other state and federal requirements applicable to license class and endorsements, and the applicant's employer agrees to provide minimally an additional 320 hours of training.

The lowering of the minimum age for commercial drivers is expected to expand the pool of eligible commercial drivers and benefit the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.

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

ADMINISTRATION

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March 16, 2026

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation:

SUBJECT: H.B. No. 1696, H.D. 2 - Relating To Commercial Driver's Licenses

HEARING: Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 3:00 p.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD) respectfully offers testimony in **support** of H.B. No. 1696, H.D. 2 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 Vehicles (DMV) administers the motor vehicle commercial driver's licensing program for the island of O'ahu.

CSD supports this measure because it provides a meaningful opportunity to strengthen Hawai'i's workforce while maintaining appropriate licensing standards. Lowering the minimum age for an intrastate commercial driver's license to eighteen years of age expands the pool of eligible drivers at a time when many industries are experiencing persistent workforce shortages.

This bill also creates earlier access to structured training and supervised commercial driving experience. Allowing qualified young adults to enter the commercial driving field sooner supports career development, skill-building, and long-term workforce retention. For many residents, commercial driving offers a stable career path with competitive wages and opportunities for advancement.

Testimony for H.B. No. 1696, H.D. 2  
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From an administrative perspective, aligning state law with federal intrastate allowances provides clarity and consistency in licensing requirements. With appropriate safeguards in place, this measure supports workforce development goals while preserving public safety and regulatory oversight.

For these reasons, the Department of Customer Services **supports**  
H.B. No. 1696, H.D. 2.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on H.B. No. 1696, H.D. 2.

Sincerely,

*for* Kimberly M. Hashiro  
Director

**TESTIMONY OF YOUR NAME  
NAME OF COMPANY  
MARCH 17, 2026  
HB 1696 HD2 RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION.**

Good afternoon, Chair Inouye, and members of the Senate Committee on Transportation. I am **YOUR NAME** from **COMPANY NAME**, and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

We strongly support HB 1696 HD2. This measure lowers the age of who may drive commercially within the State from nineteen to eighteen; repeals the requirement that a person only operates category 3 vehicles to qualify to drive commercially in the State. Requires the Department of Transportation to amend its rules to lower the minimum age required for a commercial driver's license; and is effective 7/1/3000.

Lowering the age to eighteen aligns commercial driving with legal adulthood and high school graduation. It creates a direct workforce pathway for recent graduates and vocational students at a time when Hawai'i continues to face driver shortages. Allowing earlier entry will strengthen the local driver pipeline and help businesses fill critical positions.

Commercial drivers are essential to moving food, fuel, construction materials, and medical supplies statewide. Expanding eligibility increases the available labor pool, helping stabilize supply chains, reduce delays, and control transportation costs that affect consumers.

We applaud the language requiring employers to provide an additional minimum of 320 hours of training for drivers ages 18–20 and to maintain training records.

Lowering the age does not remove safety standards. Drivers will still be subject to licensing requirements, testing, medical certification, and safety regulations. This measure simply expands eligibility to qualified individuals while maintaining oversight.

This bill is a practical workforce solution that supports local businesses, strengthens Hawai'i's transportation system, and removes unnecessary barriers while preserving regulatory safeguards.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.



**HAWAIIAN  
COUNCIL**

**LATE**

**Hawai'i State Senate  
Committee on Transportation**

HB1696, HD2 – Relating to Commercial Driver's Licenses

**RE: Support for HB1696, HD2**

March 17, 2026

Hawaiian Council writes in support for HB1696, HD2, which would lower barriers to workforce development for critical infrastructure to our islands.

Hawaiian Council is a 501(c)3 member-based non-profit committed to advancing the cultural, economic, and community development of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiians, with a focus on economic development by advancing self-sufficiency. One of our flagship programs, the Hawaiian Trades Academy (HTA), focuses on creating pathways to economic empowerment and uplifting the state by equipping students with the tools and training necessary to achieve financial resilience and success. Since its inception in 2019, we have served over 1,000 graduates across multiple trades, including CDL-A Licensing.

Lowering the CDL license age would create meaningful opportunities for young adults while helping address the nationwide truck driver shortage that affects supply chains and local businesses. For years, every island has faced a shortage of truck drivers, bus drivers, and other CDL licensed workers. Allowing qualified, well-trained younger drivers to obtain a CDL earlier—under strict safety standards, graduated licensing requirements, and enhanced training programs—would open doors to stable, well-paying careers without requiring a four-year degree. This bill would strengthen workforce development, support economic growth, and provide a structured pathway into a critical industry, without disregarding safety as the top priority.

For these reasons, Hawaiian Council urges this committee to pass HB1696, HD2. Mahalo for your commitment to economic development and workforce development.

Mālama pono,

**Madelyn McKeague**

Director of Advocacy, Hawaiian Council

**HAWAIIANS ADVANCING HAWAI'I**

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**HB-1696-HD-2**

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 5:04:59 AM

Testimony for TRS on 3/17/2026 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

1696 HB RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES.

CDL drivers are critical and vital to Hawai'i economy, WITHOUT them no shipping cargo from the docks would be delivered to our food chain supermarkets, hospitals, schools, etc.