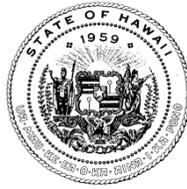


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**STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU**  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

Thursday, February 19, 2026  
9:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, 430

**HB2026**  
**RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**

House Committee on Transportation

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The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) supports H.B. No. 2026, which restricts motor vehicles that tow a motor vehicle or trailer from the far-left lane on roads with three or more lanes going in the same direction. This legislation improves safety by prohibiting oversized commercial vehicles and motor vehicles towing trailers from occupying the leftmost lane unless they are actively overtaking or turning left, thereby improving traffic flow and reducing the risk of accidents.

The bill specifically defines “commercial vehicle” in accordance with existing statutes and includes important exemptions for vehicles engaged in turning maneuvers, exiting roads, and those used for public transit, school buses, and emergency services. These exemptions ensure that essential transportation functions are not unduly hindered while still maintaining the intent to enhance road safety.

Additionally, the bill establishes clear penalties for violations, including fines and potential attendance at traffic safety courses, which will encourage compliance and reinforce responsible driving behavior. Importantly, the restriction applies only to counties with a population of 500,000 or more, aligning with the HDOT's understanding that high-density areas experience greater traffic congestion and thus require targeted interventions.

This measure reflects sound transportation policy and supports the HDOT's ongoing efforts to promote safer, more efficient roadways. The inclusion of specific language regarding when such vehicles may legally occupy the left lane particularly during overtaking or turning ensures that the law is both enforceable and practical for drivers and law enforcement alike.

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



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, MANAGING DIRECTOR  
HAWAII TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION  
FEBRUARY 19, 2026  
HB 2026 RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION.**

Aloha Chair Kila and members of the House Committee on Transportation. I am Tina Yamaki, Managing Director of the Hawaii Transportation Association and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Hawaii Transportation Association (HTA Hawaii) was founded in 1938 and incorporated in 1963, and is a private, non-profit trade organization dedicated to the service and assistance to the commercial ground transportation industry in the State of Hawaii. Our members include family owned small and medium sized businesses, independent owner operators, and national motor carriers range from delivery services to passenger carriers - as well as allied industry partners.

HTA Hawaii understands the intent, we have concerns regarding HB 2026 as currently written. This measure restricts motor vehicles that tow a motor vehicle or trailer from the far left lane on roads with three or more lanes going in the same direction with exemptions; specifies penalties for restricted motor vehicles who drive in the far left lane on roads with three or more lanes moving in the same direction; and applies restrictions and penalties to a county with a population of 500,000 or more.

We respectfully offer some suggested changes with this measure due to its potential unintended impacts on traffic flow, safety, and goods movement.

We recommend the following amendments:

**Recommended Amendment**

Change the word AND to OR

*The commercial vehicle or motor vehicle towing a vehicle or trailer is able to maintain speed with existing traffic flow; **or** the commercial vehicle or motor vehicle towing a vehicle or trailer is in the process of overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction under the rules governing such movement.*

Replacing “**and**” with “**or**” clarifies that either condition independently justifies left-lane use. Under the current language, a vehicle must both maintain traffic speed **and** be actively overtaking, which is unnecessarily restrictive. Commercial vehicles that can safely maintain prevailing traffic speed should not be confined to slower lanes, as this promotes more uniform lane speeds and smoother traffic flow. Allowing appropriate left-lane access reduces excessive lane changes by passenger vehicles attempting to maneuver around trucks, which improves safety, particularly during peak commuting periods.

Restricting commercial vehicles to slower lanes increases stop-and-go operation, leading to higher fuel consumption and greater emissions counter to Hawaii’s emission-reduction objectives. Modern commercial vehicles commonly operate with governed speeds. Policies based on outdated fleet performance assumptions do not reflect current operational realities. Concentrating heavy vehicles in right lanes contributes to speed variance, vehicle platooning, and increased lane-change conflicts as faster vehicles weave between lanes, elevating crash risk.

Distributing heavy vehicles more evenly across lanes reduces exposure to merge turbulence and improves overall traffic stability.

We would also like to suggest that ALL buses not just public transport and school buses be allowed to use the left lane.

**Recommended Amendment**

*(b) This section shall not apply to:*

**2. All buses**, including public transit buses, school buses, tour buses, and other commercially operated passenger buses, as well as authorized emergency vehicles.

Allowing all buses to access the left lane aligns with transportation system efficiency principles similar to those used in HOV policies. Buses, including tour buses, reduce the number of individual rental and private vehicles on the roadway, improving person-throughput. Tour buses share key operational characteristics with public and school buses (1) comparable gross vehicle weight; (2) similar acceleration and deceleration performance; (3) long stopping distances; (4) wide turning radii; and (5) operation by commercially licensed professional drivers.

Excluding tour buses creates artificial distinctions among vehicles that behave nearly identically in traffic operations. Consistency in policy reduces unpredictable vehicle interactions. Tour bus drivers are CDL licensed, trained in defensive driving, and subject to hours-of-service regulations, leading to more predictable driving behavior relative to the general driving population. Tour bus operations often involve fixed itineraries, airport transfers, and time-sensitive group travel. Improved travel-time reliability reduces curb congestion, schedule disruptions, and downstream traffic effects.

Smoother operating speeds and reduced stop-and-go conditions improve fuel efficiency and reduce emissions per passenger-mile, while lowering congestion-related idling. Tour buses are operationally indistinguishable from other large passenger buses in traffic flow terms. Providing equal left-lane access promotes safety, flow stability, emissions reduction, and person-mobility efficiency statewide.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to amend this measure to allow lane use based on operating behavior and traffic conditions rather than a blanket restriction.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

**Testimony of Jamie Barut, Vice President Operations  
Polynesian Adventure Tours, LLC.  
February 19, 2026  
HB 2026 Relating to Transportation**



Aloha Chair Kila and members of the House Committee on Transportation.

I am Jamie Barut, Vice President of Operations for Polynesian Adventure Tours. I appreciate the opportunity to testify. Polynesian Adventure Tours started in July of 1977 and has evolved to become a premier and luxury motor coach service operating on Oahu, Maui, Hawai'i Island and Kaua'i. We service our visitors, local sports teams, State of Hawaii Department of Education, high school bands, military, reunions, churches and many other entities including our local community.

Polynesian Adventure Tours understands the intent; we have concerns regarding HB 2026 as currently written. This measure restricts motor vehicles that tow a motor vehicle or trailer from the far left lane on roads with three or more lanes going in the same direction with exemptions; specifies penalties for restricted motor vehicles who drive in the far left lane on roads with three or more lanes moving in the same direction; and applies restrictions and penalties to a county with a population of 500,000 or more.

We respectfully offer some suggested changes with this measure due to its potential unintended impacts on traffic flow, safety, and goods movement.

We recommend the following amendments:

#### **Recommended Amendment**

Change the word AND to OR

The commercial vehicle or motor vehicle towing a vehicle or trailer can maintain speed with existing traffic flow; or the commercial vehicle or motor vehicle towing a vehicle or trailer is in the process of overtaking and passing another vehicle proceeding in the same direction under the rules governing such movement.

Replacing "and" with "or" clarifies that either condition independently justifies left-lane use. Under the current language, a vehicle must both maintain traffic speed and be actively overtaking, which is unnecessarily restrictive. Commercial vehicles that can safely maintain prevailing traffic speed should not be confined to slower lanes, as this promotes more uniform lane speeds and smoother traffic flow. Allowing appropriate left-lane access reduces excessive lane changes by passenger vehicles attempting to maneuver around trucks, which improves safety, particularly during peak commuting periods.

Restricting commercial vehicles to slower lanes increases stop-and-go operation, leading to higher fuel consumption and greater emissions counter to Hawai'i's emission-reduction objectives. Modern commercial vehicles commonly operate with governed speeds. Policies based on outdated fleet performance assumptions do not reflect current operational realities. Concentrating heavy vehicles in right lanes contributes to speed variance, vehicle platooning, and increased lane-change conflicts as faster vehicles weave between lanes, elevating crash risk.

Distributing heavy vehicles more evenly across lanes reduces exposure to merge turbulence and improves overall traffic stability.

We would also like to suggest that ALL buses, not just public transport, and school buses be allowed to use the left lane.

### **Recommended Amendment**

(b) This section shall not apply to:

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For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to amend this measure to allow left lane use based on operating behavior and traffic conditions rather than a blanket restriction.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.