

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



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

EDWIN H. SNIFFEN  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors  
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele  
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TAMMY L. LEE  
CURT T. OTAGURO  
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

Thursday, February 5, 2026  
9:30 AM  
State Capitol, 430

HB2081  
**RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSING**

House Committee on Transportation

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) supports H.B. 2081, which requires that state and county firefighters exempt from commercial driver licensure be subject to an alcohol and substance abuse policy for employees that is equivalent to, or exceeds the provisions of, the safety and health standards established by the United States Department of Transportation for holders of commercial driver's licenses.

This legislation addresses a critical gap in safety oversight for individuals operating commercial motor vehicles in emergency response roles. Under subsection (b) of the proposed amendment, state and county firefighters who are exempt from licensure due to their public service function must now adhere to rigorous alcohol and substance abuse policies that mirror or exceed federal DOT standards. This ensures that even those operating emergency vehicles such as fire pumpers, aerial ladder trucks, and elevated platform trucks are held to the same high safety benchmarks as commercial drivers licensed under federal regulations.

The inclusion of this requirement strengthens public safety by ensuring accountability and consistency across all commercial vehicle operators, regardless of their employment status or exemption status. It aligns with the DOT's core mission to promote safe transportation practices and reduce risks associated with impaired driving, particularly in high-stakes emergency scenarios where firefighter response times and operational integrity are paramount.

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



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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR  
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

**BRENNA 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  
**BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO**  
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**  
Thursday, February 5, 2026  
9:30AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 430

In consideration of  
**HB2081, RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSING**

Chair Kila, Vice Chair Miyake, and the members of the committee:

The Department of Human Resources Development (HRD) is in **support** of HB2081, which requires that state and county firefighters who are currently exempt from commercial driver licensure (CDL) requirements be subject to an alcohol and substance abuse policy for employees that is equivalent to, or exceeds the provisions of, the safety and health standards established by the United States Department of Transportation for holders of commercial driver's licenses.

Because firefighters are exempt from commercial driver license requirements, they are also exempt from the associated controlled substance and alcohol testing requirements applied to other workers with CDL. Due to their roles as first responders, firefighters should be subject to an alcohol and substance abuse policy, and HRD supports the intent of this measure.

Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 382 provides for exceptions, for a State who has at its discretion, exempted the requirements of part 383, Commercial Driver's License Standards, Requirements and Penalties of this subchapter. Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) §286-235.5 exempts federal, state and county firefighters and law enforcement officers who drive federal, state, or county authorized emergency vehicles provided that they are trained by the federal, state, or county government and are equipped with audible and visual signals and are not subject to normal traffic regulation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA LIMAHAHA  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

650 SOUTH KING STREET, 10TH FLOOR • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-8500 • FAX: (808) 768-5563 • WEBSITE [honolulu.gov/dhr](http://honolulu.gov/dhr)

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



NOLA N. MIYASAKI  
DIRECTOR  
PO'O  
  
KAREN MILLER  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
KOKUA PO'O

February 4, 2026

The Honorable Darius K. Kila, Chair  
The Honorable Tyson K. Miyake, Vice Chair  
and Members of the House Committee on Transportation  
The House of Representatives, Room 430  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kila, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members of the Committee:

**SUBJECT: House Bill No. 2081  
Relating to Commercial Driver Licensing**

The City and County of Honolulu strongly supports HB 2081. Under federal law, a commercial driver's license (CDL) is required for individuals operating certain types of commercial motor vehicles (CMV). A CMV is generally defined as a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating (GVWR) of 10,001 pounds or more. Fire trucks would typically fall under this category. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), along with the Department of Transportation (DOT), requires that persons subject to the CDL requirements and their employers follow alcohol and drug testing rules. These rules include procedures for testing, frequency of tests, and substances tested for.

On March 8, 1996, a federal exemption for fire fighters was enacted. Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 382, provides for exemptions from the above requirement if the State of that employer has specifically waived these requirements.

At around the same time, the Hawai'i State Legislature exempted fire fighters from CDL licensure as provided under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS), §286-235.5. While Hawai'i law expressly exempts fire fighters from CDL licensure, it does not appear that the Legislature intended to exempt fire fighters from drug and alcohol testing requirements under the FMCSA rules 49 CFR Part 382. This is evident in the applicable 1996 House Committee report, which is attached, and provides in part, that "this bill does not jeopardize public safety because it would not exempt firefighters from meeting federal requirements, including alcohol and drug testing, driver improvement training, and driver physical standards."

The Honorable Darius K. Kila, Chair  
The Honorable Tyson K. Miyake, Vice Chair  
and Members of the House Committee on Transportation  
February 4, 2026  
Page 2

This bill would support the intent of the Legislature in that fire fighters that are employed by the state and counties, and who are exempt from licensure under §286-235.5, HRS, to be subject to an alcohol and substance abuse policy that is equivalent to, or exceeds the provisions of, the safety and health standards established by the United States DOT for holders of CDLs. A similar requirement already applies to emergency medical services (EMS) personnel under §321-226, HRS. Establishing this requirement for fire fighters will help ensure the safety of our fire fighters and the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Sincerely,



Nola N. Miyasaki  
Director

Attachment

amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2564, H.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce.

Signed by all members of the Committee.

**SCRep. 74-96 Intergovernmental Relations and International Affairs and Transportation on H.B. No. 2850**

The purpose of this bill is to exempt state and county firefighters who drive state or county fire trucks from commercial driver licensing requirements, provided that the firefighters are trained by the fire departments, the vehicles are equipped with audible and visual signals, and firefighters not be subject to normal traffic regulations.

The Department of Transportation testified in support of the intent of the measure. The Hawaii State Fire Fighters Association and the Honolulu Fire Department testified in support of the measure, indicating that the present requirements are unnecessary and burdensome. A private citizen submitted written testimony in opposition citing safety and liability issues.

It is not the intent of your Committees to diminish public safety, but to give state and county firefighters the same status as federal firefighters. Furthermore, this bill does not jeopardize public safety because it would not exempt firefighters from meeting federal requirements, including alcohol and drug testing, driver improvement training, and driver physical standards.

Based on the recommendations of the Department of Transportation, your Committees have amended this bill to give state and county firefighters the same status as federal firefighters. Specifically, the requirements for state and county firefighters to be trained by the fire departments, vehicles to be equipped with audible and visual signals, and firefighters not be subject to normal traffic regulations, have been deleted.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committees on Intergovernmental Relations and International Affairs and Transportation that are attached to this report, your Committees are in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2850, as amended herein, and recommend that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2850, H.D. 1, and be referred to the Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce.

Signed by all members of the Committees.

**SCRep. 75-96 Higher Education and the Arts on H.B. No. 3585**

The purpose of this bill is to:

Allow the University of Hawaii Board of Regents to continue to set the President's salary beyond July 1, 1998.

The Board of Regents submitted testimony in support of this bill. No testimony was received in opposition.

Your Committee finds that the Board of Regents has the responsibility to appoint a President and must have the authority to set the conditions of employment, including the annual compensation for the President. Without this authority, it would be difficult for the Board to appoint and retain an individual whom the Board feels would be able to carry out its policies.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Higher Education and the Arts that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 3585 and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to the Committee on Labor and Public Employment.

Signed by all members of the Committee except Representatives Santiago, Stegmaier and Yonamine.

**SCRep. 76-96 Transportation on H.B. No. 3580**

The purpose of this bill is to amend the existing statutory provisions relating to the method by which parking violations at public airports may be adjudicated by recipients.

Your Committee on Transportation finds that the decriminalization of minor traffic offenses such as parking violations, driving without a seat belt, and similar infractions did not include minor traffic offenses at public airports, since the statutory authority for such violations under Section 261-21, Hawaii Revised Statutes, was not included in the enabling legislation. Your Committee further finds that parking violations, other than violations at airports, come under the adjudication of traffic infractions for which monetary assessments are prescribed in a schedule set by the district court of each circuit. This bill makes parking violations at the State's airports consistent with parking violations at other areas outside the airports.

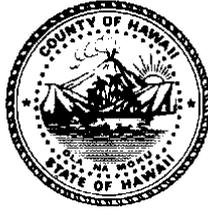
Supportive testimony was heard from the Department of Transportation and the Judiciary.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Transportation that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 3580 and recommends that it pass Second Reading and be referred to the Committee on Judiciary.

Signed by all members of the Committee except Representative Ward.

**SCRep. 77-96 Transportation on H.B. No. 3581**

**C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.**  
*Mayor*



**William V. Brillhante, Jr.**  
*Managing Director*

**Merrick Nishimoto**  
*Deputy Managing Director*

## *County of Hawai'i ~ Office of the Mayor*

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • Phone (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553  
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokālole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740  
Phone (808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

Testimony of  
**C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.**  
Mayor, County of Hawai'i

Before the House Committee on  
**Transportation**  
Rep. Darius K. Kila, Chair  
Rep. Tyson K. Miyake, Vice Chair

**Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 9:30 A.M.**  
State Capitol Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**House Bill 2081**  
**Relating to Commercial Driver Licensing**

Aloha Chair Kila, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members of the Committee on Transportation,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2081. This legislation is a vital step toward enhancing public safety and maintaining the highest standards among our first responders.

While state and county firefighters may be exempt from holding commercial driver's licenses, they frequently operate large vehicles and specialized apparatus that require the utmost professionalism and safety practices.

House Bill 2081 appropriately ensures that all firefighters, regardless of licensure status, are held to alcohol and substance abuse standards that are at least equivalent to those required by the U.S. Department of Transportation for commercial drivers.

By adopting these rigorous policies, we reinforce our commitment to the safety of our island communities and the well-being of our firefighters. This measure will further strengthen public trust and enhance the operational readiness of our emergency response teams.

I respectfully urge the passage of House Bill 2081.

# OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

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## Testimony of Derek S.K. Kawakami

Mayor, County of Kaua'i

Before the

### House Committee on Transportation

February 5, 2026; 9:30 AM

Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

In consideration of

### House Bill 2081

Relating to Commercial Driver Licensing

Honorable Chair Kila, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members of the Committee:

The County of Kaua'i is in **support** of HB2081 which requires that state and county firefighters exempt from commercial driver licensure be subject to an alcohol and substance abuse policy for employees that is equivalent to, or exceeds the provisions of, the safety and health standards established by the United States Department of Transportation for holders of commercial driver's licenses.

Although the Hawai'i State Legislature exempted firefighters from Commercial Driver's License (CDL) requirements under Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) §286-235.5., we believe the Legislature did not intend to exempt them from federal drug and alcohol testing requirements.

This bill will ensure that the legislative intent requiring state and county firefighters who are exempt from licensure under HRS §286-235.5 comply with an alcohol and substance abuse policy that meets or exceeds the safety and health standards established by the United States Department of Transportation for CDL holders.

Passage of HB 2081 will enhance safety for both firefighters and the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of HB 2081.

**HONOLULU FIRE DEPARTMENT  
KA 'OIHANA KINAI AHI O HONOLULU  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

636 SOUTH STREET • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 723-7139 • FAX: (808) 723-7111 • WEBSITE: honolulu.gov

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



SHELDON K. HAO  
FIRE CHIEF  
LUNA NUI KINAI AHI  
  
JASON SAMALA  
DEPUTY FIRE CHIEF  
HOPE LUNA NUI KINAI AHI

February 3, 2026

The Honorable Darius Kila, Chair  
Committee on Transportation  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 322  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kila:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 2081 Relating to Commercial Driver Licensing

The Honolulu Fire Department (HFD) supports HB 2081, which requires operators of certain commercial motor vehicles, including fire apparatuses, to comply with alcohol and drug testing requirements administered by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

Although Hawaii State law exempts fire fighters (FF) from commercial driver's license (CDL) licensure under Hawai'i Revised Status §286-235.5, this exemption was not intended to remove FFs who serve in safety-sensitive positions, from applicable federal safety requirements, including alcohol and drug testing.

This proposal aligns directly with our mission to provide safety through prevention, preparedness, and effective emergency response by ensuring FFs are prepared to execute their roles safely and effectively.

We strongly believe this measure will help to ensure the safety of our FFs and the public we serve.

Should you have questions, please contact Assistant Chief Reid Yoshida of our Support Services division at 808-723-7104 or ryoshida@honolulu.gov.

Sincerely,

SHELDON K. HAO  
Fire Chief

SKH/RY:cn

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Mayor

**JOSIAH K. NISHITA**  
Managing Director



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.mauicounty.gov](http://www.mauicounty.gov)

TO: Representative Darius K. Kila, Chair  
Representative Tyson K. Miyake, Vice Chair  
Committee on Transportation

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor  
Bradford K. Ventura, Fire Chief

DATE: February 4, 2026

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB 2081, RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVERS LICENSING**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure.

House Bill 2081 requires that state and county firefighters exempt from commercial driver licensure be subject to an alcohol and substance abuse policy for employees that is equivalent to, or exceeds the provisions of, the safety and health standards established by the United States Department of Transportation for holders of commercial driver's licenses.

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. It will ensure alignment of policies and procedures regarding this matter across the State and County fire departments.
2. It will enhance the public's trust in our firefighters as well as the operational readiness of our first responders in their times of crisis.

Mahalo for your consideration.



## HAWAII FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS LOCAL 1463, AFL-CIO  
1018 PALM DRIVE, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96814-1929  
TELEPHONE (808) 949-1566 FAX: (808) 952-6003  
WEBSITE: [www.hawaii firefighters.org](http://www.hawaii firefighters.org)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION OF 2026  
February 5, 2026

Committee on Transportation

H.B. No. 2081      RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSING      TRN,LAB, FIN

Dear Chair Kila and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i Fire Fighters Association (HFFA), IAFF Local 1463, AFL-CIO represents more than 2,000 professional active-duty fire fighters throughout the State. The HFFA, on behalf of all our Bargaining Unit 11 (BU11) members, strongly opposes H.B. No. 2081, which requires the state and county firefighters exempt from commercial driver licensure be subject to an of, the safety and health standards established by the United States Department of Transportation for holders of commercial driver's licenses (CDL).

While the bill would require firefighters exempt from CDLs to follow alcohol and substance abuse policies equal to or exceeding U.S. Department of Transportation standards, HFFA members are already covered by a long-standing, jointly negotiated Drug and Alcohol Testing (DAT) pursuant to the BU 11 DAT Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that mirrors those federal standards.

The current DAT MOA was implemented since 1997 and updated only through mutual agreement, is a mandatory subject of bargaining under Chapter 89, HRS. H.B. 2081 would improperly bypass collective bargaining and allow employers to unilaterally impose changes to firefighters' terms and conditions of employment. Any proposed modifications to drug and alcohol testing policies must be negotiated at the bargaining table and not mandated through legislation that undermines public employees' constitutional and statutory bargaining rights.

We respectfully request that H.B. No. 2081 be held in Committee.



JOSIAH K. NISHITA  
Managing Director

BRADFORD K. VENTURA  
Fire Chief

GAVIN L.M. FUJIOKA  
Deputy Fire Chief

**DEPARTMENT OF FIRE & PUBLIC SAFETY**

COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 DAIRY ROAD  
KAHULUI, MAUI, HAWAI'I 96732

[www.mauicounty.gov](http://www.mauicounty.gov)

February 4, 2026

The Honorable Darius K. Kila, Chair  
Committee on Transportation  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 322  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kila,

**SUBJECT: HOUSE BILL (HB) 2081 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER LICENSING**

I am Bradford K. Ventura, member of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Maui Fire Department. The SFC supports HB 2081, which requires that state and county fire fighters (FF), who are exempt from commercial driver licensure, be subject to an alcohol and substance abuse policy for employees that is equivalent to or exceeds the provisions of the safety and health standards established by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for holders of commercial driver's licenses (CDL).

Federal law requires operators of certain commercial motor vehicles, including fire apparatuses, to comply with alcohol and drug testing requirements administered by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the DOT. Although Hawaii State law exempts FFs from CDL licensure under Hawai'i Revised Statutes §286-235.5, the legislature did not intend to exempt FFs from these federal safety requirements.

This intent is reflected in the 1996 House Committee Report, which states that the CDL exemption for FFs, a safety-sensitive position, does not compromise public safety and waive federal requirements, including alcohol and drug testing.

HB 2081 affirms this intent by requiring state and county FFs, who are exempt from CDL licensure, to be subject to an alcohol and substance abuse policy that is equivalent to or exceeds DOT standards. This measure will help ensure the safety of FFs and the public.

The SFC urges your committee's support of the passage of HB 2081.

If you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at (808) 723-7169 or [glum@honolulu.gov](mailto:glum@honolulu.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Ventura".

BRADFORD K. VENTURA  
Fire Chief

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



MIKE LAMBERT  
Director

ERNEST J. ROBELLO  
Deputy Director  
Administration

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT GOVERNOR  
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai*  
715 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

JARED K. REDULLA  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

February 3, 2026

The Honorable Darius K. Kila, Chair  
Committee on Transportation  
House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Room 322  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Kila:

Subject: House Bill (HB) 2081 Relating to Commercial Driver Licensing

I am Sheldon K. Hao, Chair of the State Fire Council (SFC) and Fire Chief of the Honolulu Fire Department. The SFC supports HB 2081, which requires that state and county fire fighters (FF), who are exempt from commercial driver licensure, be subject to an alcohol and substance abuse policy for employees that is equivalent to or exceeds the provisions of the safety and health standards established by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for holders of commercial driver's licenses (CDL).

Federal law requires operators of certain commercial motor vehicles, including fire apparatuses, to comply with alcohol and drug testing requirements administered by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and the DOT. Although Hawaii State law exempts FFs from CDL licensure under Hawai'i Revised Statutes §286-235.5, the legislature did not intend to exempt FFs from these federal safety requirements.

This intent is reflected in the 1996 House Committee Report, which states that the CDL exemption for FFs, a safety-sensitive position, does not compromise public safety and waive federal requirements, including alcohol and drug testing.

HB 2081 affirms this intent by requiring state and county FFs, who are exempt from CDL licensure, to be subject to an alcohol and substance abuse policy that is equivalent to or exceeds DOT standards. This measure will help ensure the safety of FFs and the public.

The SFC urges your committee's support of the passage of HB 2081.

The Honorable Darius Kila, Chair  
Page 2  
February 3, 2026

Should you have questions, please contact SFC Administrative Specialist Gary Lum at 723-7169 or [glum@honolulu.gov](mailto:glum@honolulu.gov).

Sincerely,

SHELDON K. HAO  
Chair

SKH/GL:cn