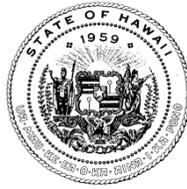


JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



EDWIN H. SNIFFEN
DIRECTOR
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

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

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

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, 325

HB2415, HD1
RELATING TO TRAFFIC SAFETY

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) supports the intent of H.B. No. 2415, HD1, which appropriates funds for the installation of all-way crosswalks at sites abutting school properties. While all-way crosswalks improve pedestrian visibility, they represent only one of several strategies for improving pedestrian safety. Each potential location should be evaluated to determine the most appropriate safety improvements to implement.

All-way crosswalks are highly effective in areas with exceptionally high foot traffic, such as in Waikiki at Kalakaua Avenue and Lewers Street, or Ala Moana Boulevard at Hobron Lane and Kalia Road, where large volumes of pedestrians cross in multiple directions, justifying the need for an all-way crossing phase to eliminate vehicle-pedestrian conflicts. However, crosswalks and intersections abutting school properties may not experience the same level of pedestrian volume as these locations.

When developing and funding traffic improvements, HDOT prioritizes intersections and areas based on objective criteria, including crash history and assessed risk levels. We also utilize the HDOT Safety Analytics platform, a data-driven tool that enhances roadway safety through advanced analytics, visualization, and predictive insights. It leverages spatial analysis to transform historical and real-time data into actionable strategies for safer infrastructure. In addition, HDOT is accelerating delivery of our priority multimodal network, with over \$300 million in bicycle and pedestrian projects over the next 10 years. Multimodal network project prioritization considered proximity to schools and areas with higher concentrations of youth. The DOT recognizes that pedestrian safety near schools is a shared responsibility, and investing in proper crosswalk infrastructure helps reduce the risk of crashes and enhances community confidence in safe travel routes.

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

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION
Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau
P.O. BOX 259
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540
FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

GARY S. SUGANUMA
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. No. 2451, H.D.1, Relating to Transportation

BEFORE THE:

House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

DATE: Tuesday, February 17, 2026
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
LOCATION: State Capitol, Conference Room 325

Chair Lowen, Vice-Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding H.B. 2451, H.D.1, for your consideration.

H.B. 2451, H.D.1, adds a new section under chapter 46, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) directing each county to implement a program offering public transportation services at no cost to all riders to their respective public transportation systems. Each county, subject to availability of funds and approval by DOTAX, would be eligible for reimbursement in the following amounts:

- \$2,500,000 for the county of Kaua'i;
- \$5,000,000 for the county of Hawai'i;
- \$45,000,000 for the city and county of Honolulu; and
- \$5,000,000 for the county of Maui;

These eligible amounts of reimbursement are to be annually adjusted for inflation.

Section 3 of the bill creates a fare-free public transportation tax and dividend special fund, to receive funds from the taxes collected under newly proposed subsection 243-3.5(a)(6), HRS, money appropriated by the legislature, and earned or accrued

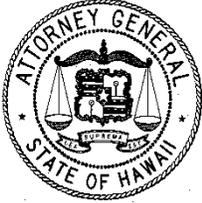
interest on money in the fund. The fund would be administered by DOTAX and used to reimburse the counties for providing the public with fare-free access to public transportation systems.

Section 4 of the bill amends section 243-3.5(a), HRS, by increasing the state environmental response, energy, and food security tax (“barrel tax”) on each barrel or fractional part of a barrel of petroleum product sold by a distributor to any retail dealer or end user of petroleum product, other than a refiner. The rate would increase from its current \$1.05 per barrel or fractional part of a barrel to \$3.35, with an annual increase in an amount to be determined on January 1 of each year beginning in 2028. With this tax increase, \$2.30 of the tax collected will be deposited into the “fare-free public transportation tax and dividend special fund” under a newly proposed subsection (a)(6). The amount deposited each subsequent year is to increase by an undetermined amount.

The bill has a defective effective date of July 1, 3000, provided that section 4 takes effect on January 1, 2027.

DOTAX notes that it can report the amount of taxes collected that should be deposited into the fare-free public transportation tax and dividend special fund, but DOTAX does not have the subject matter expertise or capacity to review costs incurred by the counties and make determinations regarding eligibility, issue reimbursements to the counties, and otherwise administer the special fund. Accordingly, DOTAX requests that it be removed as the agency responsible for administering the special fund.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE, 2026**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

H.B. NO. 2451, H.D. 1, RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DATE: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 **TIME:** 9:30 a.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 325

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Kacyn H. Fujii, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Lowen and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General provides the following comments.

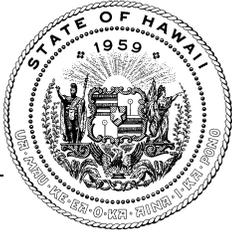
The purpose of this bill is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote sustainability by providing fare-free access to public transportation and increasing taxes on petroleum products. This bill establishes the fare-free public transportation tax and dividend special fund to serve this purpose.

This bill does not contain an appropriation to authorize expenditures out of the fare-free public transportation tax and dividend special fund. Article VII, section 5, of the Hawaii Constitution, states: "No public money shall be expended except pursuant to appropriations made by law." As such, we recommend adding an appropriation out of the new special fund, such as the following provision:

"SECTION __. There is appropriated out of the fare-free public transportation tax and dividend special fund the sum of \$_____ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year _____ for the purposes of the special fund.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of taxation for the purposes of this Act."

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.



HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

235 South Beretania Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Telephone:
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JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARK B. GLICK
CHIEF ENERGY OFFICER

(808) 451-6648
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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Videoconference

Providing Comments on
HOUSE BILL NO. 2451 HD1

RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION.

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) offers the following comments on House Bill No. 2451 HD1, which requires counties to implement fare-free public transit for all riders, establishes the Fare-Free Public Transportation Tax and Dividend Special Fund, and increases the environmental response, energy, and food security tax on petroleum products to support fare-free transit statewide.

HSEO appreciates the Legislature's continued focus on improving access to affordable, equitable transportation options for Hawai'i's residents. Transportation is Hawai'i's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and policies that expand access to efficient, shared transportation modes can play an important role in advancing the State's long-term energy and climate objectives.

Hawai'i has established ambitious statutory goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by fifty percent by 2030 and achieve net negative emissions by 2045. Meeting these targets will require a portfolio of strategies, including reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), improved system efficiency, and expanded access to low- and zero-emission mobility options. Increasing public transit use can contribute meaningfully to these outcomes.

HSEO's 2023 Pathways to Decarbonization Report to the Legislature¹ emphasizes that reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicle travel is an important complement to vehicle electrification. The report highlights land use, travel behavior, and access to shared transportation as key drivers of transportation energy demand. Programs that lower barriers to transit use for the general public can shape long-term travel patterns while providing household cost savings and mobility benefits.

HSEO also notes that transportation mode choice depends on factors beyond fare levels, including service frequency, reliability, travel time, safety, and connectivity. Data collection and evaluation are needed to understand how fare-free transit affects ridership, system performance, and emissions and to inform future policy decisions.

Finally, HSEO recognizes that fare-free access to public transit supports broader state priorities related to equity, public health, and safety. For households facing transportation cost burdens or limited access to private vehicles, reliable transit can improve access to education, employment, and essential services, particularly for low-income residents. To the extent that fare-free transit results in increased transit use, it contributes to reduced traffic congestion and supports more efficient use of roadway infrastructure.

HSEO defers to the Department of Budget and Finance on the budgetary impact of increasing the environmental response, energy, and food security tax funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ <https://energy.hawaii.gov/what-we-do/clean-energy-vision/decarbonization-strategy/>



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

February 17, 2026 at 9:30AM

Conference Room 325

HB 2451 HD 1

Relating to Transportation

Dear Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports HB 2451 HD 1**, which requires each county to implement fare-free access to its public transportation systems, establishes the Fare-Free Public Transportation Tax and Dividend Special Fund, and increases the Environmental Response, Energy, and Food Security Tax on petroleum products to fund fare-free public transportation.

This bill is consistent with several goals of the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan including support for active and public transportation, promoting an equitable transportation system, and improving air quality and protecting environmental and cultural assets.¹ Establishing statewide fare-free access to public transportation systems will help offset the significant subsidies allotted to vehicle owners and drivers, reduce transportation costs for existing transit riders, and potentially encourage other residents whose primary reason for not trying public transit is its cost.

According to the City and County of Honolulu's Department of Transportation Services' Public Transit Title VI Program, 71% of Oahu transit riders have a household income of less than \$60,000, with 21% making less than \$20,000.² More than half (54%) of Oahu transit riders do not have an available vehicle at home, and 27% of transit riders only have one working vehicle at home.³ This means that for the majority of transit riders, their transit fare makes up a large portion of their income and many have no transportation alternatives.

¹ https://oahumpo.org/?wpfb_dl=2215

² <https://www.honolulu.gov/dts/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/2025/03/DRAFT-2025-DTS-Public-Transit-TVI-Program-Report.pdf>

³ IBID.

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a long-range (25-year horizon) metropolitan transportation plan, referred to as the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), which encourages and promotes a safe, efficient, and resilient transportation system that serves the mobility needs of all people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
KA 'OIHANA LAWELAWE 'ŌHUA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

711 KAPI'OLANI BOULEVARD, SUITE 1600 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
Phone: (808) 768-8305 • Fax: (808) 768-4730 • Website: honolulu.gov/transportation

RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEJA



J. ROGER MORTON
DIRECTOR
PO'O

HONGLONG LI, Ph D., P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
HOPE PO'O

TESTIMONY OF J. ROGER MORTON
DIRECTOR OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY
& ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:30 AM
Conference RM 325 and Via Videoconference

TO: Rep. Nicole E. Lowen, Chair, Rep. Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

RE: COMMENTS ON HOUSE BILL 2451, HD1, RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection. My name is J. Roger Morton, and I serve as the Director of the Department of Transportation Services (DTS) for the City and County of Honolulu (City).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2451, HD1, which would compensate the counties for providing fare free service to county transit system users. DTS generally supports the policy goals of this measure, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving transportation equity, reducing congestion and vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and increasing access to public transportation. Transit plays a critical role in achieving the State's climate and energy objectives, and fare policy is an important tool in shaping travel behavior. However, DTS respectfully offers the following fiscal and operational considerations for the Committee's review:

Scale of the Existing Transit System Costs

On O'ahu, the combined annual operating cost of TheBus and Skyline (excluding Handi-Van paratransit services) is approximately \$400 million per year. Of this amount transit riders currently contribute roughly \$50 million annually in passenger fares and the federal government provides approximately \$21 million in recurring operating assistance. These existing revenue sources are critical components of the current funding structure.

State Reimbursement Does Not Fully Replace Fare Revenue

The bill proposes an annual reimbursement of \$45 million to the City for fare-free transit. While substantial, this amount does not fully replace existing passenger fare revenue, nor does it account for potential reductions in federal operating assistance that could result from the elimination of fares or changes in federal transit policy.

Lack of a Guaranteed, Durable Revenue Source

Although the bill establishes a special fund supported by increased petroleum taxes, reimbursement to counties remains subject to availability of funds. Absent a constitutionally or statutorily protected revenue source, there is no assurance that the State would be able to sustain this subsidy during economic downturns or recessionary periods, precisely when transit demand tends to increase and local revenues decline.

Service Expansion Pressures Under Fare-Free Transit

Experience nationally and locally indicates that fare-free transit would likely generate significant ridership growth and require significant service expansion, particularly on the bus system. National research syntheses commonly find that moving to fare-free service increases ridership by roughly **20% to 60%** (again, measured in trips/boardings). For a robust transit system such as exists on O'ahu, the increase in ridership might amount to about 25% to 40%. A rough order-of-magnitude for O'ahu (boardings / passenger trips) would produce the following increases:

- If +25%: ~10 million additional trips/year – about 30,000 more trips per day
- If +40%: ~16–17 million additional trips/year – about 50,000 more trips per day

That's before factoring in any additional rail growth. To maintain service quality and reliability, this would necessitate:

- Expanded bus service levels;
- Additional annual operating costs estimated in the range of \$50 million to \$75 million; and
- Capital investments in additional buses and at least one new or expanded bus operating and maintenance facility.

However, these capital and operating impacts are not addressed in the bill's funding structure.

Importance of Access Control for Safety, Security, and System Management

Beyond funding and capacity considerations, **some form of access control is an important operational and security tool** for a large, complex transit system. Fare media and controlled entry points—whether physical or digital—help establish a clear **contractual relationship** between the transit provider and the customer, defining expectations for appropriate behavior and use of the system.

When transit is provided without any access control, the system effectively shifts from a customer-based service model to a generalized entitlement. While DTS supports broad public access to transit, the absence of access controls can limit the ability of operators and security personnel to:

- Enforce codes of conduct and address prohibited activities;
- Manage fare evasion–related interactions that often serve as early points of contact for identifying disorderly or unsafe behavior;
- Exclude individuals who pose a demonstrated safety risk to passengers or employees, consistent with due process and existing ordinances; and
- Maintain orderly use of stations, vehicles, and platforms, particularly in high-density environments.

Experience across transit systems nationwide shows that **access control—combined with clear rules of use—supports a safer environment for riders and frontline employees**, including bus operators and rail staff. Even in a fare-free framework, maintaining some form of validation, registration, or controlled entry can help preserve these important safety and management functions.

From a logistical perspective while it appears that HOLO would provide such controls, it's important to understand that HOLO is not a flash pass as some of you may remember from your high school days. HOLO is a digital media that transmits data to a back end. While HOLO is very flexible from a user perspective, it is very complex as an information system.

Short-Term Capacity and Workforce Constraints

Even if additional operating funds were ultimately made available, **transit service cannot be expanded immediately**. Increasing bus service requires multiple years to:

- Recruit, hire, and train qualified bus operators and maintenance personnel;
- Procure new buses, which typically have lead times of 18–36 months; and
- Design, permit, and construct expanded or new bus operating and maintenance facilities.
- As a result, a rapid transition to fare-free transit could **inadvertently lead to overcrowded and overloaded buses in the short term**, particularly on high-demand routes, undermining service reliability, customer experience, and safety until sufficient staff and fleet capacity can be added.

Consider an Incremental, Data-Driven Approach

Given the fiscal magnitude and operational implications of systemwide fare-free transit, DTS respectfully suggests that the Legislature consider a more incremental and evidence-based pathway.

Rather than implementing universal fare-free access immediately, a phased approach—targeted to specific populations—would allow the State and counties to measure actual behavioral change, emissions impacts, operational strain, and long-term fiscal sustainability.

For example, HB 1879, HD1, which proposes subsidized youth transit access for keiki, and HB 2034, HD1, which contemplates a one-year pilot employee ride-free program for State Department of Transportation (HDOT) workers, could provide meaningful data on ridership elasticity, service demand, and workforce impacts. The City could structure a very affordable contract fare for such pilot programs to preserve accountability while minimizing cost barriers. For the Keiki Ride Free initiative, the City could offer a two-year pilot program for about \$8,000,000 per year to cover all 200,000+ keiki on the Island of Oahu. For the HDOT pilot program, the City could offer a two-year pilot program for about \$330,000 per year to cover all Oahu-based HDOT employees.

The City has already implemented a two-year pilot program for City employees effective July 1, 2025. Early results have been very encouraging. The City experienced approximately \$87,000 per year in foregone fare revenue. Monthly City employee ridership increased from approximately 5,500 rides in June 2025 to approximately 22,000 rides in December 2025 and the number of City employees using transit at least once per month grew from about 200 employees to nearly 1,000 employees. This demonstrates that targeted fare relief can significantly change commuting behavior at relatively modest fiscal exposure. Programs of this type allow policymakers to observe real-world impacts before committing to a structural change that affects the entire transit funding model.

DTS supports continued exploration of fare policy reforms that advance equity, sustainability, and climate goals. However, we respectfully caution that fare-free transit at a systemwide scale requires a fully funded, durable, and recession-proof revenue structure, as well as explicit recognition of the additional operating and capital costs associated with increased demand.

We look forward to working with the Legislature, the state administration, and our HDOT partners to further refine this proposal in a manner that is both fiscally responsible and operationally sustainable.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

735 Bishop Street, Suite 417

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: ADMINISTRATION, FUEL, Increase Barrel Tax to Fund Fare-Free Public Transportation

BILL NUMBER: HB 2451 HD1

INTRODUCED BY: TRN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Beginning 1/1/2027, requires each county to implement fare-free access to its public transportation systems. Establishes the Fare-Free Public Transportation Tax and Dividend Special Fund. Increases the Environmental Response, Energy, and Food Security Tax on petroleum products to fund fare-free public transportation.

SYNOPSIS: Adds a new section to chapter 46, HRS, requiring each county to implement fare-free access to its public transportation system and allowing it to be reimbursed a certain amount per fiscal year out of a newly established special fund. That certain amount will be annually adjusted for inflation.

Adds a new section to chapter 231, HRS, to establish the Fare-Free Public Transportation Tax and Dividend Special Fund. The fund would be fed by an earmark on the barrel tax, as discussed below; legislative appropriations; and earnings on fund assets.

Amends section 243-3.5, HRS, to increase the tax on each barrel of petroleum product from \$1.05 to \$3.35, with incremental increases each year thereafter. The difference of \$2.30 plus the annual increases will go to the aforementioned special fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 3000, except that the tax increase takes effect on January 1, 2027. STAFF COMMENTS: The barrel tax, HRS section 243-3.5, now imposes a tax of \$1.05 on each barrel of petroleum product sold to an end user. It also imposes a tax on 19 cents per million BTU on a fossil fuel other than a petroleum product that is sold to an end user.

If it is proposed to raise the barrel tax on petroleum products, we question why there is no comparable increase to the barrel tax on non-petroleum fossil fuels.

In addition, the proposed measure would perpetuate the earmarking of tax revenues. The cost of fare-free public transportation may be a worthy expense if considered alone. But does that justify bypassing the normal appropriation and budgeting process that also considers invasive species, risks to the social safety net, and the aging infrastructure in our educational system?

Earmarking revenues from any tax type for a particular purpose decreases transparency and accountability.

Re: HB 2451 HD1

Page 2

Next, it should be remembered that revenues diverted for a special purpose, in this case to fund fare-free public transportation, will not be counted against the state's spending ceiling or debt limit and will obscure the state's true financial condition.

Digested: 2/12/2026



Testimony in Support for HB2451 - Relating to Public Transit
Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection (EEP)
Tuesday, February 17th, 2026 at 09:30AM

Dear Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and members of the EEP committee, Mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of HB2451**, which would require each county to implement fare-free access to its public transportation systems. The bill would also increase the Environmental Response, Energy, and Food Security Tax on petroleum products to fund fare-free public transportation.

Public transit is more than a way to get from place to place—it is essential infrastructure that supports economic opportunity, public health, and climate resilience. For many Hawai'i residents, public transportation is a lifeline, providing access to work, school, health care, food, and social services. Yet transit fares remain a significant barrier, particularly for low-income households, seniors, people with disabilities, youth, and individuals who do not have access to a private vehicle. Locally, this appears to be particularly true. On O'ahu an estimated 21 percent of bus riders have a household annual income of less than \$20,000, and 71 percent have a household income of less than \$60,000.¹ Additionally, 54 percent of O'ahu bus riders do not have a vehicle at home and 53 percent do not have a driver's license.²

Fare-free public transportation is one of the most effective ways to improve mobility for people of all ages and backgrounds. Data from existing local and national fare-free transit programs consistently show that **eliminating fares leads to increased transit ridership, reduced household transportation costs, increased access to employment and essential services, boosted local economic activity, and reductions in vehicle travel, fuel consumption, and carbon emissions.**³

Hawai'i already has some experience with fare-free transit. Hawai'i County's Hele-On bus system has been completely fare-free since 2022, demonstrating that fare-free service is both feasible and popular. Maui County offers fare-free access for youth, seniors and income eligible households, while other counties maintain a patchwork of reduced-fare programs. While these efforts are valuable, they result in uneven access to transit across the state. Whether someone can afford to ride—or ride at all—often depends on where they live, their age, income, or eligibility for a specific program.

¹ Department of Transportation Services, 2025 Public Transit Title VI Program, City and County of Honolulu, accessed September 2025.
<https://www4.honolulu.gov/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-352782/Final%202025%20DTS%20Public%20Transit%20TVI%20Program%20Report%20-%20-%2008-2025.pdf>

² Ibid.

³ Massachusetts Budget & Policy Center, "Freeing the Climate: Environmental Benefits of Eliminating Transit Fares," 2021.
<https://massbudget.org/2021/03/24/freeing-the-climate-environmental-benefits-of-eliminating-transit-fares/>.

A statewide approach to fare-free transit, as proposed under HB2451, would eliminate these inconsistencies and ensure that all residents, regardless of county or circumstance, can access public transportation without financial barriers. Universal fare-free transit also reduces administrative costs associated with fare collection, enforcement, and eligibility verification, allowing transit agencies to focus resources on improving service frequency, reliability, and coverage.

Importantly, HB2451 aligns transportation funding with Hawai'i's broader environmental and climate goals. The proposed increase to the Environmental Response, Energy, and Food Security Tax on petroleum products reflects an approach that reinvests revenue from fossil fuel consumption into cleaner transportation options that are available to individuals of all ages, income levels, and physical abilities. This policy direction is especially critical as Hawai'i works to meet its statutory commitment to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 under HRS §225P-5.

Currently, the State's transportation spending priorities remain heavily skewed toward vehicle infrastructure. Based on Hawai'i Appleseed's 2024 analysis, the Hawai'i Department of Transportation's capital improvement program averaged roughly \$700 million annually over the past decade, with more than two-thirds directed toward expanding vehicle capacity and only a small fraction invested in pedestrian, bicycling, and transit infrastructure.⁴ This imbalance has contributed to traffic congestion, high transportation costs, and continued dependence on fossil fuels—outcomes that fare-free public transit can help reverse.⁵

In summary, HB2451 represents a transformative opportunity to reduce household transportation costs, expand residents' mobility options, and advance the State's climate and energy goals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.



Abbey Seitz

Director of Transportation Equity

Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

⁴ Seitz, A., "Shifting budget priorities to expand mobility options & reduce vehicle travel," Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, December, 2024. <https://hiappleseed.org/publications/rethinking-roads>.

⁵ Ibid.



Chair Lowen
Vice Chair Perruso
House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
9:30 AM

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF HB2451 HD1 RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

Aloha Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection,

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission was first created through Act 106 in 2018, "to advise the governor and legislature on the effects of legislative policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning the youth of the State." The Hawai'i State Youth Commission's Environment legislative committee is in **strong support** of **HB2451 HD1**.

Hawai'i, already vulnerable to natural disasters, has witnessed the detrimental effects of climate change firsthand. With the additional burden of high living costs and increasing bus fares, the residents of Hawai'i face heavy burdens from the climate crisis in their everyday lives. For instance, with rising maintenance costs, Honolulu County was propelled to pass Bill 54, which increases the one-way transportation fee by 25 cents; annual and monthly rates will increase accordingly.¹ The pertinence of climate mitigation and affordability is intertwined in the State's public transportation system. As mentioned in HB2451 HD1, a transition to cleaner energy is necessary, and fare-free access to transportation ameliorates the issue. Starting in 2027, the fare-free public transportation tax would fund counties to provide fare-free transit, creating a sustainable economic cycle for both Hawai'i's residents and the counties within it. To achieve the State's zero-emissions goal by 2045, active measures must be taken to promote reduced fossil fuel utilization and increased public transportation usage; passing HB2451 HD1 is a necessary step to achieve this goal.

¹ Rev. Ordinances of Honolulu § 15B-2.1 (2026).

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission recognizes the significance of public transportation and affordable fares in creating a cleaner environment for the next generation of thinkers, innovators, and leaders. Moreover, extending fare-free access to the broader community paves the way for a future where our community is less vulnerable to economic and climatic struggles. Therefore, the Hawai'i State Youth Commission strongly urges the committee to **PASS HB2451 HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

The Hawai'i State Youth Commission
hawaiistateyc@gmail.com



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Worker Initiatives

Environmental Health

Hawai'i Climate Change and Health
Working Group

Hawai'i Drug & Alcohol-Free Coalitions

Hawai'i Immunization Coalition

Hawai'i Oral Health Coalition

Hawai'i Public Health Training Hui

Healthy Eating + Active Living

Kūpuna Collective/Healthy Aging &
Community Living

Public Health Workforce Development

Date: February 13, 2026

To: Representative Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair
Members of the House Committee on Energy and Environmental
Protection

Re: Support for HB 2451 HD1 Relating To Transportation

Hrg: February 17, 2026, at 9:30 AM, Conference Room 325

Hawai'i Public Health Institute (HIPHI)¹ and the Healthy Eating + Active Living² (HEAL) Statewide Coalition are in **support of HB 2451 HD1**, which would require each county to implement **fare-free access to its public transportation systems** beginning January 1, 2027 and establish a dedicated fund to reimburse counties through an increased Environmental Response, Energy, and Food Security Tax on petroleum products.

Necessary Public Service

Public transportation is more than a mobility option – it is an essential public service that connects residents to jobs, education, healthcare, and community resources. Fare costs disproportionately burden low- and moderate-income households and act as a barrier to equitable access. By eliminating fares across all counties, HB 2451 HD1 increases the affordability of transit for residents who depend on buses, rail, and paratransit services but are stretched by Hawai'i's extremely high cost of living.

Over 400,000 people in Hawai'i have Limited Access to a Car

42.4% of residents over the age of 10 do not have access to a personal vehicle that would support daily travel needs.³ Providing universally free fare across the state would enable those without personal transportation to equitably access opportunities that would advance their healthy, economic status, and connect communities.

¹ Hawai'i Public Health Institute's mission is to advance health and wellness for the people and islands of Hawai'i. We do this through expanding our understanding of what creates health of people and place, fostering partnerships, and cultivating programs to improve policies, systems, and the environments where people live, learn, work, age, and play.

² The Healthy Eating + Active Living (HEAL) Coalition, formerly known as the Obesity Prevention Task Force, was created by the legislature in 2012 and is comprised of over 60 statewide organizations. The HEAL Coalition works to make recommendations to reshape Hawai'i's school, work, community, and health care environments, making healthier lifestyles obtainable for all Hawai'i residents.

³ NRDC. (2025, December). Car Access Fact Sheet for Hawaii.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1kmDzOGYSkbEbwEHBSCkJha8C7iKrwwQ7/view?usp=share_link



Aligning With Climate Goals

This measure aligns with the State's broader climate goals, including achieving a zero-emissions clean economy, by encouraging transit use over single-occupancy vehicle trips. Free transit increases ridership and reduces greenhouse gas emissions, congestion, and transportation costs for households, thereby supporting both environmental sustainability and economic resilience. Fare-free transit programs nationwide have increased ridership while reducing fuel use and carbon emissions.⁴

Rising Costs and Limited Options on O'ahu and Kaua'i

On O'ahu, residents face limited bus route options and increased costs. The Honolulu City Council recently passed more than a 10% increase to fares, creating an even greater barrier to transportation.⁵ We should instead be making public transit free and accessible to all.

Proven Successes on Maui and Hawai'i Island

Maui County allows free public transit for its youth already, with Hawai'i County allowing for free public transportation for the entire island. Since implementing this program, ridership has more than doubled in Hawai'i County. We can follow the lead from Maui and Hawai'i Island and provide free transportation access for all of our youth.

Universal access to transportation would:

- Remove stigma and administrative barriers tied to income-based eligibility⁶
- Improve mobility and independence for youth, seniors, and residents without reliable access to private vehicles
- Strengthen workforce access and local economic participation by connecting people to jobs
- Reduce traffic vehicle crashes, air pollution, and associated respiratory illnesses, and increase physical activity levels⁷

By mandating fare-free access statewide and establishing a dedicated funding source, this bill enhances mobility, supports climate goals, and invests in the economic well-being of our residents. HB 2451 HD1 creates consistent statewide access, removes financial barriers, and aligns with our climate goals at a modest cost compared to ongoing investments in vehicle infrastructure.

⁴ Massachusetts Budget & Policy Center, *Freeing the Climate: Environmental Benefits of Eliminating Transit Fares*, 2021. <https://massbudget.org/2021/03/24/freeing-the-climate-environmental-benefits-of-eliminating-transit-fares/>.

⁵ Hawai'i Department of Education, "EXPRESS County Bus Pass Program," accessed January, 2026. <https://hawaiipublicschools.org/school-services/express-county-bus-pass-program/>

⁶ Chapman, L. E., (2025). Understanding Free or Reduced-Price School Meal Stigma: A Qualitative Analysis of Parent Perspectives. *The Journal of school health*, 95(6), 389–399. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.70004>

⁷ CDC. (2026, January 14). Improving Health Through Transportation Advocacy Policy. <https://www.cdc.gov/transportation/php/about/index.html>



Mahalo for the opportunity to testify and for your commitment to advancing fair, sustainable transportation in Hawai'i.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Patti Hatzistavrakis'.

Patti Hatzistavrakis
Active Transportation Specialist



ADDRESS
3442 Wai'ālae Ave., Suite 1
Honolulu, HI 96816

PHONE
808-735-5756

EMAIL
bicycle@hbl.org

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
Tuesday - February 17, 2026 - 9:30am

Hawai'i Bicycling League Supports HB 2451, HD1, Relating to Transportation

Aloha Chair Kila, Vice Chair Miyake, and members of the Committee,

My name is Eduardo Hernandez and I am the Advocacy Director of the Hawai'i Bicycling League (HBL). We are a non-profit organization founded in 1975 with the mission of enabling more people to ride bicycles for health, recreation, and transportation. We strive to create communities across our islands that have safe, accessible, and inclusive environments for people to bike, walk, and roll.

HBL supports HB 2451, HD1 to require each county to implement fare-free access to public transportation systems. This legislation represents the single most transformative step we can take toward a sustainable, equitable, and functional transportation system in Hawai'i. By requiring counties to provide fare-free transit access to all residents and funding it through a modest increase in the barrel tax, this bill addresses three interconnected crises at once: climate, affordability, and mobility.

Given that 2025 was one of the deadliest years in decades on Hawai'i roads, it is imperative to take bold action to influence public behavior change and raise awareness about road safety for all road users, especially vulnerable users, including keiki and kūpuna. This is aligned with Vision Zero and Complete Street principles which have been adopted by the State and the Counties. Free transit removes the single greatest barrier to mode shift –cost–and makes riding the bus the logical, default choice for thousands of daily trips. More transit riders will make our roads safer for all users.

Eliminating fares will help individuals and families address the affordability of transportation and free up funds for other essential needs, including housing and healthcare.

Free transit is a public infrastructure investment that everyone deserves. We don't charge residents to use public roads, sidewalks, or libraries, why would we charge them high user fees to ride transit? Meanwhile, we know that too many cars on our roads have created a host of harmful outcomes from costly traffic, wasted time, and dangerous conditions caused by frustrated drivers speed or are impaired.

We urge you to pass this bill and help leverage the economic, health and environmental benefits it presents so that individuals and families can be better supported in their active transportation. Mahalo for your time and consideration.

S/Eduardo Hernandez

Eduardo Hernandez
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Bicycling League

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:56:44 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Susan B Roberts Emery	Green Party of Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Honorable members of committee,

My name is Susan RobertsEmery, as Co Chair of the Green Party of Hawai'i, I am writing on behalf of our members to offer Very Strong Support for HB2451 HD1. With the passage of this important bill it will put Hawai'i closer in compliance with the settlement agreement in Navahine v. HDOT. In this settlement a plan was created by HDOT to identify the critical near-, mid-, and long-term policies needed to address transportation greenhouse gas emissions. This bill addresses one of those critical solutions. Transitioning to fare-free public transportation systems would increase ridership and access for low-income residents while reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. Our youth , some of which are are becoming adults , while they wait for their hard work to be recognized by the legislature, may be losing hope that any changes in their climate future will take place. Time for the adults in the room to step forward and have the backs of our Keiki.

Please support HB2451 HD1 !

Mahalo!

Susan RobertsEmery

Green Party of Hawai'i

Paauilo



Testimony in Support of HB2451 HD1
Hearing on February 17, 2026 at 9:30am
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the House EEP Committee,

My name is Doorae Shin, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Our Children's Trust in strong support of HB2451 HD1, which establishes fare-free transit in all counties in Hawai'i.

This bill addresses a critical and growing challenge facing families across our state: the high and rising cost of transportation. Transportation is one of the largest household expenses in Hawai'i, and for many families, transit fares create a real barrier to accessing school, jobs, healthcare, extracurricular activities, and community resources. By making public transit free for residents, this bill provides immediate and meaningful relief to families while expanding mobility, independence, and opportunity for families across Hawai'i.

Free transit also promotes equity and access. Residents from lower-income households, rural communities, and families without reliable access to a private vehicle are disproportionately impacted by transportation costs. This bill helps ensure that a person's ability to participate fully in education and community life is not determined by their family's income or zip code. By strengthening and simplifying existing transit access programs, this bill creates a more consistent and accessible system statewide.

In addition to affordability and equity benefits, this bill advances Hawai'i's climate and public health goals. Encouraging the community to use public transit reduces reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, lowers transportation-related emissions, and supports long-term mode shift toward cleaner, more sustainable transportation. Increased transit ridership also improves air quality, which is important for protecting the health of keiki, kupuna, and vulnerable populations.

HB2451 HD1 is directly aligned with Hawai'i's legal and policy obligations to reduce transportation emissions. In 2022, thirteen youth plaintiffs filed *Navahine v. Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT)*, resulting in a settlement that requires HDOT to "take any actions necessary" to achieve zero emissions from ground, marine, and inter-island aviation by no later than 2045. The settlement was agreed to as a means to protect children's constitutional rights to a life-sustaining climate system and to preserve Hawai'i's public trust resources for present and future generations. In 2025, HDOT released its Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan, which identifies the critical near-, mid-, and long-term policies needed to comply with the settlement agreement. Expanding access to public transit is a concrete and necessary step toward fulfilling these obligations.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doorae Shin".

Doorae Shin
Our Children's Trust

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:07:25 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dave Mulinix	Greenpeace Hawaii	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair & EEP Committee

My name is Dave Mulinix, Co-Founder & Hawaii State Representative of Greenpeace Hawaii. On behalf of our thousands members and supporters statewide we Stand In Strong Support of HB2451 HD1 that Beginning 1/1/2027, requires each county to implement fare-free access to its public transportation systems. Establishes the Fare-Free Public Transportation Tax and Dividend Special Fund. Increases the Environmental Response, Energy, and Food Security Tax on petroleum products to fund fare-free public transportation. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

This bill has many positive aspects not only does it provide an experience that will demonstrate to commuters that riding public transportation can just as easily get them to their destination as driving an individual car. It will help to take tens of thousands of vehicles off our roads, reducing traffic congestion and most importantly cut Hawaii's greenhouse gas emissions to help Hawaii reach our zero emission transportation system goals.

As the Hawaii State Legislature noted in 2021 that we are already in a growing Climate Emergency. We are currently experiencing the effects of the growing Climate Crisis here in Hawaii with receding shorelines, homes on the north shore of Oahu falling in the ocean, extended drought conditions, and the global warming caused firestorm that obliterated Lahaina. This is just the beginning of the devastation we are facing if we don't make a concerted effort to get off of fossil fuels as quickly as possible.

HB2451 HD1 is an excellent step in the right direction to help us cut our CO2 emissions and it helps to fulfill the agreement reached in the Navahive vs HDOT settlement.

Mahalo,

Dave Mulinix

CoFounder & Hawaii State Representative

Greenpeace Hawaii



To: The House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection
From: Sherry Pollack, Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org
Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2026, 9:30am

In support of HB2451 HD1

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Energy and Environmental Protection Committee members,

I am Co-Founder of the Hawaii chapter of 350.org, the largest international organization dedicated to fighting climate change. 350Hawaii.org is in **strong support of HB2451 HD1** that establishes fare-free transit for the public across all Hawai'i Counties.

Cities such as Albuquerque, Boston, and Iowa already offer fare-free public transportation, and it has shown remarkable results with significant increase ridership. Zero-fare public transit has garnered support among business groups, environmental advocates, and social justice organizations across the country who attest that free access to public transit supports local economies, mitigates climate changes, and provides a critical service for many individuals to carry out their day to day lives.

In 2024, the Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT) reached an unprecedented settlement in Navahine v. HDOT, with a commitment to protect children's constitutional rights to a life-sustaining climate system and to preserve Hawai'i's public trust resources for present and future generations. The settlement requires HDOT to develop and support strategies that reduce carbon pollution, including expanding and improving public transit. This measure represents a common-sense solution that directly addresses this mandate.

Transitioning to fare-free public transportation systems would increase ridership and access for low-income residents while reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions. Transportation costs place a significant financial burden on Hawai'i families, especially low-income households that rely on public transit. This bill would greatly reduce these costs and be an impactful investment to support Hawai'i residents, while also fighting climate breakdown.

To achieve Hawai'i's sustainable transportation and climate goals, we must decarbonize ground transportation as soon as possible. HB2452 HD1 will help to take thousands of vehicles off our roads, reducing traffic, and most importantly, markedly cutting Hawai'i's carbon pollution to help us reach our zero-emission transportation system goals.

We urge the Committee to support and pass this important measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sherry Pollack
Co-Founder, 350Hawaii.org



Environmental Caucus of The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

To: COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Date: February 17, 2026, Time: 9:30 a.m., Place: VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE & Room 325

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2451: Relating to Public Transportation

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i strongly supports HB2451, which establishes free public transportation for all riders statewide.

Expanding access to fare-free transit is one of the most effective strategies to:

1. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
2. Lower household transportation costs
3. Improve mobility for seniors, students, workers, and low-income residents
4. Reduce traffic congestion
5. Support Hawai'i's climate and equity goals

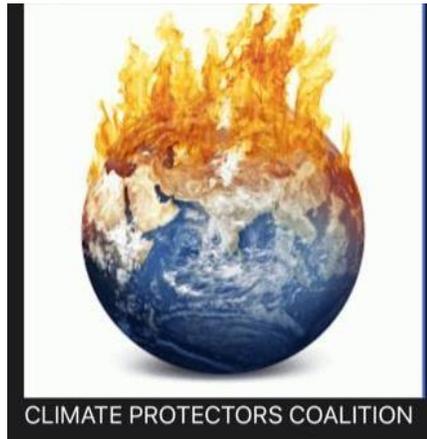
Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Hawai'i. By removing fare barriers, HB2451 encourages a shift from single-occupancy vehicles to public transit, directly supporting the State's decarbonization commitments.

Fare-free transit also provides economic relief to working families and kupuna who rely on buses as their primary mode of transportation. It strengthens social equity by ensuring that mobility is treated as a public good, not a commodity.

The Environmental Caucus applauds the Legislature for advancing this forward-looking measure and urges its passage.

For these reasons, the Environmental Caucus respectfully urges the Committee to PASS HB2451.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,
Alan Burdick, Co-chair
Mike Ewall, Co-chair
Melodie Aduja, Co-chair Emerita
Environmental Caucus Democratic Party of Hawai'i



To: The Honorable Representative Nicole Lowen, Chair, the Honorable Amy Perruso, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection.

From: Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing **HB2451 HD1 RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**

Hearing: Tuesday February 17, 2024 9:30 a.m.

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Energy and Environmental Protection Committee Members:

The mission of the Climate Protectors Hawai'i is to educate and engage the local community in climate change action.

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i SUPPORTS HB2451 HD1!

This bill will encourage more use of public transportation, support lower income riders, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Eliminating fares on public transportation systems can meaningfully increase ridership, reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles, and expand access to

essential mobility for residents across all income levels. Additionally, funding fare-free transit through increased taxes on petroleum products appropriately shifts costs toward fossil fuel use while supporting a transition to more sustainable transportation choices. This measure advances the State's clean economy goals by requiring fare-free public transportation statewide and establishing a dedicated funding mechanism to reimburse counties for providing this public benefit.

For households facing transportation cost burdens or limited access to private vehicles, reliable transit can improve access to education, employment, and essential services, particularly for low income residents. To the extent that fare-free transit results in increased transit use, it contributes to reduced traffic congestion and supports more efficient use of roadway infrastructure.

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

**Comments before
February 17, 2026
House Committee on
Energy and Environmental Protection**

**IN SUPPORT OF
House Bill 2451**
Relating to Fare-Free Transit

**Mike Ewall, Esq.
Founder & Director
Energy Justice Network**
215-436-9511
mike@energyjustice.net
www.EnergyJustice.net

Aloha Honorable Committee members. Energy Justice Network is a national organization supporting grassroots groups working to transition their communities from polluting and harmful energy and waste management practices to clean energy and zero waste solutions. In Hawai'i, we've been working with residents, members and member groups since our support and involvement was first solicited in 2015.

We strongly support HB 2451 as an important way to get people out of vehicles for public health, climate and environmental reasons.

As you're aware, the *Navahine F. v. Hawaii Department of Transportation* litigation required that the Hawai'i Department of Transportation come up with a greenhouse gas reduction plan to accomplish zero emissions goals in state law. This plan, renamed to a Draft "Energy Security & Waste Reduction Plan," fell short in many ways by relying heavily on combustion technologies, burning different fuels which still have climate, environmental, and public health impacts.

Getting people out of vehicles is a far better approach, and that must be done by making public transportation free, safe, clean, easily understandable, on-time, available at convenient times and frequencies, and reaching the right locations.

Doing this by increasing the tax on gasoline is wise and effective. It has the same effect as with solid waste, where charging people per bag for trash while making recycling and composting "free" (costs still covered in the tax or rate base) – a policy known as Pay as You Throw, which causes people to reduce waste by 44% on average, with impacts that are pretty immediate. Transportation is more complex in some ways, but by setting the right financial incentives, behavior changes more easily. While HB 1879 seeks to make transit free only for keiki, this bill would help get people out of cars who aren't only 16 or 17 years old. And it's only fair, if charging everyone who fuels up their car, to distribute those benefits to all.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:36:56 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire	Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands & Ohana Unity Party	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

****Testimony in Strong Support of SB2924 – Relating to the Kanehili Community Hale****

Aloha kakou, Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM, Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I., Chairman of the Ohana Unity Party. Aloha nui loa from the heart of our islands, where we live by the guiding spirit of ****aloha****—love, compassion, mercy, kindness, and grace—and where ****‘ohana**** means we mālama every member, building spaces that strengthen our cultural roots and community bonds, as the ‘ōlelo no‘eau teaches: *‘Ike aku, ‘ike mai. Kōkua aku, kōkua mai. Pēlā ka nohona ‘ohana.* “Observe others, be observed. Help others, be helped. That is the way of family life.”

Today, I stand in full, passionate support of SB2924, urging its swift passage to fund the construction of the Kanehili Community Hale and related infrastructure at the Kanehili homestead in East Kapolei, O‘ahu. This vital bill authorizes the issuance of ****\$15,000,000**** in general obligation bonds and appropriates those funds to the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) for a capital improvement project in fiscal year 2026-2027.

The project focuses on building a ****community hale**** (with a new access road and parking lot) as the cornerstone of a multi-phase community complex that will include a lanai, imu station, craft hale, and a multi-sport court for pickleball, basketball, and volleyball. This hale will serve as a dedicated space to practice and celebrate Hawaiian culture, host educational programs, support community initiatives, and align with the principles of the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920, as amended. The Kanehili homestead community has already committed to fundraising for the broader complex, demonstrating their ****kuleana**** and dedication—now the state must step up with this targeted investment. Kanehili, a key Hawaiian homestead development on O‘ahu's ‘Ewa Plains (adjacent to the University of Hawai‘i – West O‘ahu campus), has delivered homes to hundreds of native Hawaiian beneficiaries through phases like Increment 1 and partnerships with developers such as Gentry Kapolei Development, LLC.

Yet the Hawaiian Homes program faces immense demand: DHHL's residential waitlist exceeds ****29,000 applicants**** statewide (with over ****11,000**** on O‘ahu alone), and the department awarded a historic ****~2,600 homesteads**** in 2025—the most in a single year in its 100-year history—while planning for over ****7,000**** more by the end of 2026. Despite progress

(including thousands of lots in the pipeline), people still die on the waitlist, and communities like Kanehili need gathering places to foster cultural continuity, education, health, and unity for existing lessees and future generations. Investing in the Kanehili Community Hale is a wise, high-impact use of funds: it strengthens **aloha ‘āina** by creating a hub for Hawaiian cultural practices, youth programs, elder support, and recreational activities that promote physical and mental well-being in a growing homestead area.

Such facilities reduce isolation, build social bonds, and support self-sufficiency—core goals of the Hawaiian Homes program. With DHHL needing billions more to fully address the waitlist, this **\$15 million** appropriation is a focused step that multiplies benefits for the **hundreds** already homed in Kanehili and the thousands waiting statewide.

In closing, with deepest aloha and a call to mālama our ‘ohana by investing in cultural and community spaces that endure, I respectfully ask the Committee to pass SB2924 without delay. Key reasons include: **\$15,000,000** appropriation via general obligation bonds to DHHL for the Kanehili Community Hale, access road, and parking—providing essential infrastructure for a multi-phase complex that celebrates Hawaiian culture and supports education/recreation.

- Addresses urgent needs in a thriving homestead like Kanehili (East Kapolei, O‘ahu), where hundreds of native Hawaiian families already live, with more awards coming amid a statewide waitlist of over **29,000** applicants (**11,000+** on O‘ahu).

- Builds on historic progress: DHHL awarded **~2,600** homesteads in 2025 and plans **7,000+** by end of 2026—yet communities need gathering places to sustain cultural identity and prevent hardship for those on or off the list. - Aligns with the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920, embodying **mālama**, **kuleana**, and community-led efforts (homestead fundraising for the full complex).

- True embodiment of Hawaiian values: **aloha**, **‘ohana**, **mālama**, and **kōkua aku, kōkua mai**—creating spaces where culture thrives, keiki learn, kupuna connect, and our people heal and grow together.

Mahalo nui loa for your kuleana in this meaningful work. I am available for any questions and urge you to pass SB2924—let us build with aloha, preserving our heritage for generations to come.

Master Shelby "Pikachu" Billionaire, HRM Kingdom of The Hawaiian Islands, H.I. Ohana Unity Party, Chairman www.Ohanaunityparty.com Presidentbillionaire@gmail.com

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:58:50 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Henry Curtis	Life of the Land	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

Please support this bill which advances (1) decarbonization, (2) equity, and (3) congestion

Henry Curtis

Executive Director

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 5:20:41 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Evans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen and Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection,

My name is Andrew Evans, I live in Kailua on O‘ahu, and am writing to request your support for HB 2451 to create fare-free public transportation. I would like to advocate for this bill for a unique reason: rather than only supporting low-income commuters, this bill actually encourages current car commuters (like me) to swap out the car for the bus by reducing the barriers and obstacles to public transportation.

Story time: I work at Kualoa Ranch, and have to start work early in the morning at 6AM—since the only bus line that services that area won't get me to work less than 50 minutes early, I ultimately cannot commute to work by bus no matter how much I wish. However, since my employer offers free holo cards as a work benefit (essentially offering fare-free public transportation, as offered in this bill), I DEFINITELY have swapped my car for public transportation on many of my recreational trips to town. My second job is also in Chinatown, and I definitely use the bus now that I do not have to pay for it.

Barriers certainly still exist, that limit the practicality of using public transportation (things that I face including inaccurate arrival times, buses arriving and leaving earlier than listed, transfers not being time efficient, buses not running frequently enough, early enough, or late enough in the day)—and these barriers ALSO need to be addressed to achieve public transportation and climate goals. However, I do see universal no-fare public transportation as a CERTAIN method for incentivizing current car-commuters to use public transportation—I am the example. And this will promote Hawaii's climate mandates and will alleviate traffic congestion and ultimately make commuting more enjoyable.

I do request you support passing HB2451 and make it effective soon, our climate and our cities and communities cannot wait.

Mahalo,

Andrew Evans

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 5:49:08 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Colleen Moriarty	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will help to reduce traffic, wear and tear on our roads, reduce parking congestion, reduce the environmental impact of driving, remove transportation as a barrier for those who cannot drive themselves.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 6:21:44 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
B.A. McClintock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill. Mahalo.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 6:30:12 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Donald T Silipa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and thank you for your time! I believe transit should be free because some people are just barely getting by with the resources that they have. Some don't even have enough kālā to catch the bus to holoholo. That's not fair. Making transit free will also help encourage more people to use mass transit thereby limiting the amount of pollution going into the air.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 8:05:16 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hinamoeatu Fale	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because I strongly believe that our citizens deserve access to free and reliable public transportation. Public transportation helps to reduce our collective impact on the environment by reducing emissions. Making this transportation free will provide incentive for more people to use it. Making public transportation free will also support the underprivileged members of our community who rely on it daily to get to work, school and other important appointments. I believe that passing this bill will have a strong positive impact on our local community.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 9:57:43 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Crystal Tee Sy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We should be working with the environment and looking for ways to improve, not against it by increasing the fare, which will deter people from riding TheBus or the Skyline. As someone who uses public transportation regularly, having fare-free access will provide me as well as others a peace of mind, especially with the cost of living in Hawaii.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/11/2026 11:38:38 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mea L. Perry, OPPOSE

2451 HB RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

Supporter of public transportation like the Bus and NOT the Skyline. My question as a consumer, what would be my cost for petroleum products?

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 7:53:01 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ashley Sanchez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of this bill.

I ride by bike to and from work every day. Last week and this week, when there were dangerous winds, I was unable to get to work on my bike, and instead had to drive my family car for safety. I would rather have taken the bus, but the cost is prohibitive to me. Please make this a free, public service. Maybe even free for residents only, and they just show their state ID or drivers license at the door. And make tourists pay.

Mahalo nui for your time.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 2:27:54 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Waters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Writing in strong support of free public transit for all. Mahalo.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 4:17:29 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ramona Hussey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB2451 HD1

Hearing with the House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the House EEP Committee,

My name is Ramona Hussey, and I live in Hilo, Hawai'i. I am writing in strong support of HB2451, which would establish fare-free public transit across Hawai'i counties.

Currently, my County – the Big Island of Hawai'i - continues to provide free bus service all over the island. My understanding was that this began during COVID, but the County Council recently extended it for another 3 years.

I am a senior citizen, and I still drive a car. But there are many seniors where I live that depend on the regular, free bus service in Hilo. In addition, the distances are GREAT on this island. It's almost impossible to get from the rural areas without a car – OR a reliable bus service. And part of being reliable - is whether it's affordable. I consider the Big Island's FREE bus service an essential service for the folks who live on the Big Island. Transportation costs place a significant financial burden on Hawai'i families, especially low-income households that rely on public transit. I am hopeful that this critical service will be provided to all the people of our state.

Please support this important bill to make transit more equitable and accessible.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2451 HD1.

Ramona Hussey

Kamana Elderly Housing

Hilo, Hawai`i 96720

Feb. 12, 2026

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 4:19:37 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Louis Chua	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of HB2451 HD1

Hearing with the House Committee on Energy and Environmental Protection

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the House EEP Committee,

My name is Louis Chua, and I live in Pālolo Valley on O‘ahu. I am writing in strong support of HB2451, which would establish fare-free public transit across Hawai‘i counties.

For many of us who cannot afford to own personal vehicles. The bus is an invaluable way to get to work and to visit more remote parts of the island for leisure. I cycle, and with the bus service that accomodates bicycle racks, I am able to travel promptly to work. With the rising costs to residents in Hawai‘i, subsidizing poorer residents by providing residents with free transit will not only improve efficiency, reduce traffic congestions, encourage ridership, but also allow workers to commute to job centers more conveniently. This is ultimately good for businesses needing to staff jobs.

In 2022, thirteen youth plaintiffs filed Navahine v. Hawai‘i Department of Transportation (HDOT), resulting in a settlement that requires the HDOT to “take any actions necessary” to achieve zero emissions from ground, marine, and inter-island aviation by no later than 2045. The settlement was agreed to as a means to protect children’s constitutional rights to a life-sustaining climate system and to preserve Hawai‘i’s public trust resources for present and future generations.

In 2025, HDOT released its Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan, which identifies the critical near-, mid-, and long-term policies needed to comply with the settlement agreement. This bill is one of those critical solutions.

This bill will facilitate critical climate, traffic, and public health benefits. And since transportation is Hawai‘i’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, shifting trips from private vehicles / rideshare services to public transit reduces traffic, lowers emissions, improves air quality, and supports safer roadways. Please support this important bill to make transit more equitable and accessible.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2451 HD1.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 5:00:53 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill will facilitate critical climate, traffic, and public health benefits. And since transportation is Hawai'i's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, shifting trips from private vehicles / rideshare services to public transit reduces traffic, lowers emissions, improves air quality, and supports safer roadways. Please support this important bill to make transit more equitable and accessible.

Date: February 13, 2026
Re: **STRONG SUPPORT for HB2451 HD1** RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION
Hearing Date: February 17, 2026 @ 9:30AM

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice-Chair Perruso, and members of the EEP Committee:

I'm writing in **strong support of HB2451 HD1**.

This bill would fully fund free transportation for all by slightly increasing the barrel tax by less than 10 cents per gallon. Given the demographics of public transit riders, this bill would for the most part benefit those that most need the financial support.

As to questions about will this bill incentivize people to take public transit, I've heard from college students how the offer of free transportation is the reason for taking public transit. The Big Island saw an 85% increase in ridership with its pilot free ridership program.

Though more needs to be done around public transportation such as increasing the number of buses, but offering free public transportation will reduce friction of use and benefit us all.

The bill creates a good nexus between fees on fossil fuels and reducing the State's carbon emissions, helping the State achieve its 2045 emissions targets. Improved public transportation enhances Hawaii's energy independence and reduces reliance on fossil fuel imports.

Please pass HB2451 HD1 out of your committee as an important step in improving affordability, equity, and the environment.

Mahalo nui loa,



Paul Bernstein
Honolulu, O'ahu

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 2:30:30 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cristina Holt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Cristina Holt, and I strongly support HB2451.

Let's be clear about something. Public transportation is a core function of government. This is exactly what our tax dollars are for. Roads, water systems, public safety, public schools, transit. These are not luxury services. They are foundational infrastructure that allow people to participate in society.

When we charge fares to ride the bus, we are placing a direct fee on mobility. That fee disproportionately impacts working class people, students, kūpuna, and families who are already stretched thin. The people who rely on public transit the most are the ones asked to pay for it at the point of use. Meanwhile, we subsidize highways, parking, and fossil fuel infrastructure in countless ways that are less visible but far more expensive.

In 2018, the Legislature passed Act 15, committing Hawai'i to a zero emissions clean economy by 2045. Transportation is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions in our state. We cannot meet that goal while continuing to structure our systems around private vehicle dependence.

Fare free public transit is a practical climate policy and an equity policy at the same time. If we want people to leave their cars at home, we need to make the alternative accessible, reliable, and free at the point of service.

HB2451 funds this transition by increasing the environmental response, energy, and food security tax on petroleum products and directing a dedicated portion into a special fund for fare free transit. That is a rational policy design. Fossil fuel consumption helps fund the public systems that reduce fossil fuel dependence.

Government should be investing in shared infrastructure that benefits everyone. This bill does that. It removes a barrier for working families, supports our climate commitments, and uses tax policy the way it was intended, to shape outcomes that serve the public good.

I urge you to pass HB2451.

Mahalo for your consideration.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 2:47:15 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Hagan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perusoand members of the EEP,

I am in strong support of this bill.

My name is Doug Hagan from Paia Maui. I know that even \$2 can be a burden for riding public transit. In addition it creates friction both from the rider and from the service in that the transit worker must collect money and be responsible for turning folks away. This is one of the hidden benefits of reducing transportation dates to zero. We know that from Big Island experiment in 2022 to 2025 that ridership went up 85%. Free public transportation will make a difference and will work.

In 2022, thirteen youth plaintiffs filed Navahine v. Hawai‘i Department of Transportation (HDOT), resulting in a settlement that requires the HDOT to “take any actions necessary” to achieve zero emissions from ground, marine, and inter-island aviation by no later than 2045. The settlement was agreed to as a means to protect children’s constitutional rights to a life-sustaining climate system and to preserve Hawai‘i’s public trust resources for present and future generations.

In 2025, HDOT released its Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan, which identifies the critical near-, mid-, and long-term policies needed to comply with the settlement agreement. This bill is one of those critical solutions.

Transportation costs also place a significant financial burden on Hawai‘i families, especially low-income households that rely on public transit. This bill would greatly reduce these costs and be an impactful investment to support Hawai‘i residents.

This bill will facilitate critical climate, traffic, and public health benefits. And since transportation is Hawai'i's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, shifting trips from private vehicles / rideshare services to public transit reduces traffic, lowers emissions, improves air quality, and supports safer roadways. Please support this important bill to make transit more equitable and accessible.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2451 HD1.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 5:23:59 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacob Wiencek	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members,

While much in the progressive policy vogue, there is no evidence of positive impacts. Similar free transit schemes both domestically and abroad have failed to increase ridership, failed to improve system efficiency, or improve service. The funds allocated for this effort should instead be allocated for improving and expanding our transit systems.

I strongly urge the committee to **DEFER** further consideration of this measure.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 5:42:54 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bobbie Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Anything that reduces emissions is a big plus

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 9:41:11 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair Lowen and Vice-Chair Perruso,

I am writing in strong support of SB2451 as a powerful engine of equity and sustainability statewide. As an educator, I have seen firsthand how access to transportation for Hawaii's keiki in particular can be a crucial barrier to education and opportunity. Encouraging public transport also teaches our citizens to make sustainable choices for our state and planet, helping us achieve our ambitious statewide goals of carbon neutrality. Please give you full support to this important measure.

Sincerely yours,

David Ball

Waiālae-Kahala

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 10:38:28 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of. Thank you.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 10:50:53 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dale Jensen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear EEP Committee Members:

I am a Hawaii resident concerned about our state's response to the climate crisis currently being refuted by the administration in Washington, D.C. Therefore, our state's response is more critical than ever. I find this bill, HB2451 HD1, will help to take thousands of vehicles off our roads, reducing traffic congestion, and most importantly, cut Hawaii's greenhouse gas emissions to help us reach our zero emission transportation system goals. Since transportation is Hawai'i's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, shifting trips from private vehicles / rideshare services to public transit will reduce traffic, lower emissions, improve air quality, and support safer roadways.

In addition, transportation costs place a significant financial burden on Hawai'i families, especially low-income households that rely on public transit. This bill would greatly reduce these costs and be an impactful investment to support Hawai'i residents, while also fighting climate breakdown.

Please support and pass this important bill.

Sincerely,

Dale Jensen, Kailua, Oahu.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 11:01:46 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lynne matusow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Iowa City made its buses free. Traffic cleared and so did the air. Since the fare-free program began, people in Iowa City have driven 1.8 million fewer miles and emissions have fallen by 24,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide a year, the same as taking 5,200 vehicles off the roads. Imaging how the numbers would improve here in Hawaii with a statewide program.

The savings will provide riders with more money in their pocketbooks, funds they can spend locally, putting money back into the local economy. That will then translate into new jobs.

Please move this bill forward.

Lynne Matusow

To: Representative Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

Fr: Ms. Janel Fujinaka, Makiki Resident / At-Large Board Member
Neighborhood Board Makiki – Tantalus – Papakōlea – Punchbowl

Re: Testimony on H.B. 2233 – RELATING TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION
ASSISTANCE EDUCATION PROGRAM (Strong Support)

Committee: EEP
Date/Time: February 17, 2026, 9:30 AM
Location: Conference Room 325

February 14, 2026

Aloha Chair Nicole E. Lowen, Vice-Chair Amy A. Perruso, and Committee Members,

My name is Janel Fujinaka. I am a resident of Makiki, an at-large Makiki Neighborhood Board member, and I submit this testimony as a private citizen in **strong support of HB2451 HD1**.

I also speak from personal experience as a **former City Bus Operator with Oahu Transit Services**, where I saw firsthand how essential public transportation is to working families, Kūpuna, students, and people with disabilities.

The Reality of Transit in Hawai'i

Public transit is a lifeline for thousands of O'ahu residents. The TheBus system carries an average of **127,000 riders on an average weekday** as of late 2025.

- Annual ridership per capita on O'ahu is **about 45.9 rides per person**, ranking Honolulu **10th highest in the nation**.
- Even as costs rise, fares cover **less than 15% of operating expenses**, underscoring the vital role of public investment in keeping the system running.

At the same time, riders are facing pressure from rising costs. A proposed fare increase would raise monthly passes from \$80 to \$90 and annual passes from \$880 to \$990. Research shows that **every 10% increase in fares leads to about a 3% drop in ridership**, meaning higher costs can push working families out of the system.

In dense urban neighborhoods like Makiki, where many residents are renters, seniors, students, and service workers, transit is not optional. It is often the only affordable way to get to work, school, medical appointments, and grocery stores.

Why Investment Matters

Transportation is one of the largest household expenses. Reliable transit reduces the need for car ownership, saving families thousands of dollars per year in gas, insurance, parking, and maintenance.

Public transit also:

- Reduces traffic congestion
- Improves air quality
- Supports economic activity
- Increases access to jobs and education

Honolulu's new rail system, Skyline, is already seeing growth, with **weekday ridership reaching nearly 13,000 rides per day** after expansion in 2025.

This demonstrates that when transit options expand and connect to more destinations, people use them.

Examples from Other States

Investments in transportation systems across the country have shown clear benefits:

Seattle, Washington

- Integrated bus and rail investments have produced one of the highest transit ridership rates in the U.S., with **over 41 rides per capita annually**, close to Honolulu's level.
- Expanded light rail and frequent bus corridors have reduced congestion and improved access to job centers.

Portland, Oregon

- Coordinated transit, land use, and pedestrian investments created one of the most transit-oriented cities in the country.
- Affordable transit access has helped reduce car dependency and household transportation costs.

Los Angeles, California

- Major investments in rail and bus rapid transit have expanded mobility for low-income communities and reduced commute times in key corridors.

Across the country, the lesson is clear:
When governments invest in reliable, affordable, and connected transit systems, ridership grows, family costs go down, and communities become more economically resilient.

A Frontline Perspective

As a former bus operator, I saw how critical these systems are. I transported:

- Hotel and restaurant workers heading to early shifts
- Students traveling across the island for school
- Kūpuna going to medical appointments
- Families without cars are trying to make ends meet

For many riders, missing a bus meant missing work, losing wages, or risking their jobs. Strong transportation policy is not just about vehicles or infrastructure; it is about people, opportunity, and dignity.

Conclusion

HB2451 HD1 represents an important step toward strengthening Hawai'i's transportation systems. A well-funded, coordinated, and reliable transit network is essential to:

- Support working families
- Reduce the cost of living
- Improve mobility and safety
- Build a more sustainable future

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to **pass HB2451 HD1**.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Janel S. Fujinaka, Makiki Resident
At-Large Makiki Neighborhood Board Member
Former City Bus Operator, Oahu Transit Services

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 2:19:27 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TOM DIGRAZIA	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strong support!!

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 2:57:09 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kelly O'Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Free and fast transportation is better for the environment, society, and individuals at large. It allows for more flexibility in movement and incentives less car usage and driving under the influence. I greatly support this bill as a Kamaaina as I believe it will be a great step towards building greater utilization of public transportation.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 4:03:54 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johanna Tokunaga	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

- Fare-free transit addresses three interconnected crises at once: climate, affordability, and mobility
- Fare-free transit is equivalent to how we treat roads, sidewalks, and libraries --open to everyone-- at no cost.
- Fare-free transit reduces congestion on our roadways and can improve safety

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 4:16:26 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JONATHAN LOTT	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

I am a frequent user of TheBus for many years. Modern tech has, and will continue to make public transit a viable alternative to driving a motor vehicle. Making it free will encourage many more people to park the car and get on board this relatively efficient mode of transport, which has a relatively low carbon footprint. With electric buses, the air quality impact is greatly reduced as well as the frustrations stemming from road congestion.

Jon Lott, car-free pedestrian and cyclist, Waikiki

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2026 8:41:08 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Georgia L Hoopes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members!

Transportation costs place a significant financial burden on Hawai'i families, especially low-income households that rely on public transit. This bill would greatly reduce these costs and be an impactful investment to support Hawai'i residents, while also fighting climate breakdown.

I strongly support HB2452 HD1 because it will help to take thousands of vehicles off our roads, reducing traffic congestion, and most importantly, cut Hawaii's greenhouse gas emissions to help us reach our zero emission transportation system goals. Since transportation is Hawai'i's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, shifting trips from private vehicles / rideshare services to public transit will reduce traffic, lower emissions, improve air quality, and support safer roadways.

Mahalo!

Georgia Hoopes, Kalaheo

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 7:46:56 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex Gunderman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

BLUF: Fare-free public transit is a proven way to reduce cost-of-living pressure, increase access to jobs and services, boost ridership, and strengthen a more sustainable, connected Hawai‘i.

Research consistently shows that when fares are removed, more people use public transit because cost is one of the biggest barriers to mobility. Increased ridership improves access to employment, education, and healthcare, especially for working families, students, and kūpuna. It also reduces household transportation expenses, traffic congestion, and emissions while making better use of the transit system we’ve already invested in.

Hawai‘i needs this policy because we face uniquely high living costs, limited land for new roads, and heavy dependence on cars. Fare-free transit would provide immediate financial relief, improve mobility across the island, and support a more efficient, equitable transportation system for everyone.

I strongly support HB2451.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 9:59:06 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Rogers	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Representative Lowen, Vice Chair Representative Perruso, and committee members,

I support HB2451 HD1 which would require counties to implement fare-free access to public transportation. This will increase social equity, boost economic mobility for low-income residents and fight climate change by reducing car usage.

Best Regards,

John Rogers Ewa NB #23 Transportation Committee Co-chair

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:38:47 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
amy ammen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am so glad Honolulu is considering making public transportation free because it will encourage car owners to use their vehicles less. This will result in increased safety for pedestrians and bicyclists and reduce congestion on our roadways.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 3:44:05 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Seikai Darcy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support HB 2451

Aloha Chair and committee members,

My name is Lisa and I reside in Kula, Maui, HI. I work with residents trying to survive in poverty conditions. The work I do gives me a first hand clear opportunity to see how critical transportation to medical appointments, case management, food shopping, are in their lives

The cost of living means many eat substandard food so they can purchase a bus ticket, or miss critical appointments to stabilize their health needs. I am constantly driving people, even to the emergency room because of costs and lack of access to affordable transportation.

It is an absolute joy to see this being moved forward. No one should miss appointments or choose between healthy food or to pay their phone bill because of costs. Our society expects everyone, even on pitiful fixed incomes can afford even the basics. It is not true.

May this move forward.

Mahalo plenty,

Lisa Darcy

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 6:37:07 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mary Kathryn Afable	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Free-fare for all will save both patrons and the city time and money. It's a win-win.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 7:17:10 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Hunt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

STRONG SUPPORT!

Free Fare for All will save time, money, and traffic congestion, and it provides opportunity for those who need it most.

This bill avoids costs associated with DOE determining who gets a free bus pass. It will eliminate the time and cost of issuing bus passes, screening valid passes, and the expense and maintenance of card readers on the bus.

Free Fare for All will move busses through routes in less time because there will be shorter wait times at each bus stop and riders can use both doors to board a bus, less time waiting for riders to scan their passes or find the correct change. For people with disabilities, it is one less form their doctor needs to sign. For every rider, there will be time saved from obtaining a new bus pass. Drivers who are in cars behind buses will get to their destinations in less time as well.

This legislation makes sense for everyone!

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 7:42:02 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Victoria Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

HB2452 HD1 will help take thousands of vehicles off our roads, reduce traffic congestion, and cut Hawaii's greenhouse gas emissions to help us reach our zero emission transportation system goals. Since transportation is Hawai'i's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, shifting trips from private vehicles / rideshare services to public transit will reduce traffic, lower emissions, improve air quality, and support safer roadways.

Please pass this bill.

Mahalo,

Victoria Anderson, Palolo

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 8:47:06 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alice Abellanida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 10:50:03 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jackie Keefe	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perusso, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jackie Keefe and I writing **in strong support of HB2451**, granting fare-free access to State transportation systems.

This policy will make our buses faster and more efficient by preventing rider lines, encourage healthier lifestyles through the reduction of traffic and therefore pollution, lower the cost of living for working families, and improve access to jobs, school, and healthcare.

I live on Maui, and our bus system is not what I wish it was, but I fully depend on Da Bus when I travel to O'ahu! Fare-free rides would make an incredible difference to the rider experience from both a cost and convenience perspective.

Please pass HB2451 for fare-free public transit to improve the lives of working families and decrease pollution for all of us!

Mahalo for your consideration.

Jackie Keefe, Lahaina

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/15/2026 11:01:17 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Peter J Long III	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I submit this testimony in OPPOSITION to HB 2451.

I oppose the imposition of any new fuel tax. The people of Hawaii have been taxed beyond belief! Enough already! Free Bus fares? You guys are chugging the Marxist Kool-aid again! OI' Mandami, the New York City Socialist would certainly call you cool for pushing this pig. It's always the same issue when pushing these euphoric socialist futures, you always run out of other people's money that is used to prop up the mirage!

The Bus is already running at a deficit and the projected ridership increase is the same PipeDream we heard 15 years ago when we were told Oahu needed a \$3B train that would cut H1 traffic by 60%! Yeah, that went real well for us didn't it!?

To: Representative Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair
Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 16, 2026

RE: House Bill 2451 HD1
Measure Title: RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION.
Report Title: DOTAX; Counties; Public Transportation Systems; Fare-Free
Access; Fare-Free Public Transportation Tax and Dividend Special Fund;
Environmental Response, Energy, and Food Security Tax (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 2451 HD1, however I think it may be beneficial if it were implemented, initially, as a pilot program. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:16:54 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Deven English	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong opposition of this bill.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:20:13 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Noel Morin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2451 HD1 WITH AMENDMENTS

Dear Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Committee Members:

I support the intent of HB2451 HD1. Fare-free transit addresses three measurable problems: high transportation costs for low-income families in Hawaii, mobility barriers for households statewide without reliable vehicle access, and high transportation sector emissions.

Using petroleum tax revenue to fund fare elimination implements the 2020-2022 Tax Review Commission's primary recommendation to price externalities while delivering direct public benefit.

There are opportunities to improve the measure. These **recommendations** are tied to potential undesired consequences associated with the current version.

1. **Tie the reimbursement caps to operating costs.** We expect ridership changes with free fare - we've seen this in Hawaii County and in national cases. If not addressed, we can see service issues with capacity being overwhelmed by demand. I suggest that we link reimbursement to operating demand (based on delivery metrics, passenger counts, or service hours).
2. **Rationalize visitor demand.** The bill defines fare-free access to all riders. Limiting the 'residents' will be a heavy administrative challenge. This suggests that the plan may need to account for spikes in heavy visitor corridors, or else overall service will degrade. Consider Green Fee coverage for this use case.
3. **Add performance management.** Include accountability and performance management requirements to ensure delivery of promised benefits – mobility improvement, rider satisfaction, cost of living enhancements, and emissions reductions. Include mandatory program evaluation and reauthorization decision points.

With these changes, HB2451 HD1 can deliver fare-free transit that meets objectives without triggering the service degradation that undermines public confidence in transit investment.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

[Noel Morin](#)

Climate, Sustainability, and Resilience Advocate
Hilo, Hawai'i

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:36:27 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jonathan Huynh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I support this bill because it promotes public transit use by making the fare free. Fare-free transit is equivalent to how we treat roads, sidewalks, and libraries --open to everyone-- at no cost. Fare-free transit reduces congestion on our roadways and can improve safety by reducing car dependency. The second order effects are huge: improved health as the public becomes more active, less pollution, and increased economic activity. People spend more when they are traveling on foot and view the stores during their walk rather than driving from destination to destination. In the name of equity, public transit should be rightfully subsidized by the government, paid for through taxes and fees, the majority of which should be paid by high income earners.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:42:38 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Tipton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. It not only penalizes the use of polluting fuels, it incentivizes the use of mass transit. Our roads, like our public transit, are not meant to generate profit. If we do not charge those who use personal vehicles on them, we shouldn't charge those who ride the bus on them.

HB-2451-HD-1

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HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:52:05 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Steve Parsons	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

This is a good idea!

Steve Parsons, Hanapepe Kauai EV+

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 10:02:12 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isabella Brandes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing in deep support of HB 2451. I grew up taking O'ahu's public transportation so I understand how crucial it is for our kama'aina. I also know how much O'ahu is plagued by traffic, so incentivizing public transportation like this will make a huge difference on this issue. Hawai'i's legislators are making the right choice in valuing what the people of Hawai'i truly need and rely on.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:18:56 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Richard Domingo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY OPPOSE HB2451 HD1.

Who foots the bill?

How's about lets take care of the workers, the people that have to deal with crazy situations on a daily. Some may say, "they chose to do that job". True but without them, the Transportation system collapses. NO VOTE

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:27:17 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Ciccone	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Free Fare for All will save money: It is costly to gate keep who gets on the bus or who is eligible for free fare. There are economic savings by doing away with all the infrastructure around issuing bus passes, screening valid passes, and all the maintenance of the card readers on the bus. This bill avoids costs associated with DOE determining who gets a free bus pass.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 11:49:14 AM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glenn Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 12:24:14 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Ko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hi, I believe the bus fare wave for its residents would be beneficial to help subsidize the increasing costs of living in Hawaii. (<https://livingwage.mit.edu/states/15>). This would incentivize its residents to use public transportation as well thereby potentially reducing traffic.
Thank you

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:01:07 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Robert Doi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Good Morning,

I am writing testimony in opposition to HB2451. Free buses sound great in theory however this is going to be at the cost of hardworking taxpayers paying for gas to fill up their cars to commute to work and use for their small businesses. So is it really free? With inflation, what's to stop legislators from increasing the tax from 5 cents to 10 cents or 15 cents? Where does the madness end?

Anyways, it's truly comical that nearly every legislator sitting on this committee campaigns on fixing the cost of living to make Hawaii more affordable to residents but won't hesitate to slap on a tax to inconvenience everyone to cater to a small demographic. Here's some statistics according to TheBus there are 127,468 daily rides, if those rides were individuals it only amounts to 12% of Oahus population if there are transfers involved its less that 10%. Taxing the 90% to service the 10% isn't justice, equity or fairness. It's theft, plain and simple.

I haven't rode TheBus in almost 20 years. I don't see any reason why the current taxation the city levies on Honolulu residents to maintain the current level of service is not sufficient. Increase fares for those that use the service, when fuel prices go up, drivers have to bite the bullet at the pump to keep our cars going. It should be no different for Bus passengers.

In closing, as I'm sure you all have heard this time and time again. It's expensive to live in Hawaii. Don't make it worse by imposing a senseless tax that only caters to a minority of the population.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:18:13 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christine Mau	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support fare-free transportation for all because of the environmental benefits that will occur.

Contrary to public perception, since buses are about two car lengths: a bus carrying at least 2 riders during Hawaii's rush hours make the services offered valuable. Now, the buses in Hawaii often carry way over that at all times of day, so increasing the amount of buses and ridership with the fare free system would take more cars off of the road.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 1:38:21 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lyle Wilkinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Implementing fare-free access to public transportation systems will reduce ICE passenger vehicle miles. It will mitigate income inequality by reducing transportation costs for low income commuters.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 2:56:20 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Holt	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Making public transportation free for all is a great 1st step in reducing the ever increasing traffic congestion and help negate the associated problems of pollution, accidents and road maintenance costs. Use the money saved by eliminating the costs of ticket production, enforcement, etc to finance the transportation and advertisement to get more people using public transportation.

Mahalo!

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:20:35 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katherine Fryer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support HB2451, which would establish fare-free public transit across all counties in Hawaii.

This program would be good for our environment, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution by encouraging broader use of public transportation rather than private vehicles. It would also cut down on traffic congestion. Currently some bus routes run chronically late due to traffic, but ridership incentives like HB2451 would make public transit more reliable by freeing up our roadways, providing a win-win for commuters and for our environment.

Free fare would also help relieve financial strain for everyone struggling with our affordability crisis. As someone who has worked in low wage jobs and also cannot drive due to disability, I can attest that free fare would make transport more accessible for low-income families and for those of us with mobility issues.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:24:31 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth Peck	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2451. HB 2451 proposes a significant structural change to public transportation policy by requiring counties to implement fare-free transit beginning January 1, 2027, and by establishing a dedicated funding mechanism through an increase to the Environmental Response, Energy, and Food Security Tax on petroleum products.

The policy objectives underlying this proposal warrant careful consideration. Fare-free transit systems in other jurisdictions have been associated with increased ridership, reduced fare collection friction, and improved boarding efficiency. Reduced dwell times and simplified operations can improve route reliability and overall system performance. Increased ridership may also contribute to reduced vehicle miles traveled and align with broader environmental and congestion management goals.

At the same time, this measure represents a meaningful fiscal and operational shift. Because the bill mandates county implementation while relying on a state-level revenue mechanism, long-term sustainability and reimbursement adequacy will be central to successful execution. Ongoing oversight, transparent reporting, and performance metrics will be important to ensure that increased ridership translates into measurable improvements in system efficiency and community outcomes.

Large-scale structural changes in transportation policy benefit from clear implementation benchmarks and periodic review to assess fiscal impact, service reliability, and equity outcomes. As this measure advances, attention to these implementation details will be critical.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal.

Kenneth Peck

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 3:43:41 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tuiaana Scanlan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB2451 HD1

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 4:00:25 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ken Stover	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

support

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 5:16:53 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gina Small	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

While free bus fare sounds like a good idea, it really is not.

My husband takes the bus to work, downtown, everyday and it works out well for our family because we live close enough to the bus stop and he does not have to transfer. We know that the bus is already subsidised and do not mind paying for the bus.

We also have 2 cars because the bus is not very convenient or safe for most anywhere else that we travel to.

I watched Kim Coco Ivamoto's instagram video on why she and her staff think this is a great idea. I also read all of the comments and saw that none of them were in favor of this and had great reasoning as to why it is not a good idea. a few that stood out were.

1. More homeless using it as a place to camp out for hours on end. My husband already goes a little further to a safer bus stop in Kaneohe because the closest one often has chronics that are unstable and cause a lot of trouble. One of the reasons that I would never let my daughter ride the bus from our house. Bus drivers should not have to deal with this.

2. 5 cents more per gallon is not a little thing. We are already paying for the rail with gas tax. Hawaii is already the #1 taxed stated in the country. Those who don't have much and the bus is not convenient will have to pay the tax and get no benefit. Once a tax is in place it will almost inevitably get raised at some point. Also it does not seem that our government is very good at allocating money and making sure that it goes for that purpose.

Please stop coming up with new ways to tax the people of Hawaii and make it even more expensive to live here. This is not a big need for people.

Mahalo,

Gina Small

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:08:13 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Brenner Danielson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill.

Gas is already expensive in Hawaii and does not need government help in making it more expensive. Making the bus "free" would only make it worse for those like myself that already use it and choose to pay for it.

There needs to be a fare to ensure it is used for transit purposes and not for shelter.

HB-2451-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 7:26:02 PM

Testimony for EEP on 2/17/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Nanea Lo**, and I am writing in strong support of this measure.

This bill is important because it directly advances Hawai‘i’s obligations under the settlement agreement in **Navahine v. HDOT**. In compliance with this settlement, the Hawai‘i Department of Transportation developed a comprehensive plan identifying the critical near-, mid-, and long-term policies needed to meaningfully reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. This measure addresses one of those identified critical solutions.

Transportation remains Hawai‘i’s largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. Transitioning to fare-free public transportation systems is a proven strategy to increase transit ridership, particularly among low-income residents who are most burdened by transportation costs. Removing fare barriers improves access to jobs, education, healthcare, and essential services while reducing household expenses.

At the same time, fare-free public transit reduces traffic congestion and vehicle miles traveled, leading to lower emissions, improved air quality, and safer roadways. These outcomes are essential not only for meeting our climate commitments, but also for building a more equitable, resilient, and accessible transportation system for all residents of Hawai‘i.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to support this measure.

me ke aloha ‘āina,

Nanea Lo, 96826

Sierra Club of Hawai‘i Member

Hawai‘i Workers Center Board Member

Honolulu Tenants Union Member

350 Hawai‘i Member

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i Member

Hawai'i Tax Fairness Coalition Member