



TESTIMONY OF
CAROLINE ANDERSON
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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

In consideration of
HB 2602 HD1
RELATING TO A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE

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

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) supports HB 2602 HD1 to establish a sustainable tourism infrastructure matching grant program within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to support one-time capital investments that advance measurable sustainability and climate resilience outcomes. The bill also requires private matching funds, prioritizes implementation-ready projects with measurable outcomes, and requires annual reporting to the Legislature beginning in 2027.

HTA supports the bill's intent to invest in visitor-industry infrastructure, which is an important step toward protecting the resources that define Hawai'i's visitor experience, while also addressing climate-related risks that affect communities, businesses, and the broader economy.

HTA also recognizes the value of leveraging private investment through competitive matching grants. This approach promotes fiscal responsibility while accelerating projects such as energy-efficiency upgrades, renewable energy systems, water-conservation improvements, and climate-adaptation measures. Over time, these types of investments can support greater resource efficiency, reduce environmental impacts, and reinforce Hawai'i's position as a competitive destination that plans responsibly for the future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support for HB 2602 HD1.

**Testimony to the House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
Representative Nicole E. Lowen, Chair
Representative Amy A. Perruso, Vice Chair**

**Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 9:30AM
Conference Room 325 & Videoconference**

RE: HB2602 HD1 Relating to a Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure

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

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 2602 HD1 (HB 2602 HD1), which establishes the sustainable tourism infrastructure matching grant program within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to support one-time capital investments that advance measurable sustainability and climate resilience outcomes within the State's visitor industry.

HB 2602 HD1 directly advances the Travel & Tourism pillar of the Chamber's 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii, which calls for tourism strategies that protect and enhance Hawaii's natural resources, improve the quality of visitor experiences, and build long-term industry resilience. The Travel & Tourism pillar recognizes the need for innovations that strengthen environmental stewardship — a core foundation of Hawaii's brand and economic vitality. Protecting our resources and preserving the State's natural beauty is essential to ensuring long term viability of a visitor industry that supports thousands of jobs across the state.

Strong public support in the Green Fee has highlighted the market demand for efforts aimed at sustainable tourism. With such high demand, it is evident that not all proposals may be able to be supported by limited Green Fee funding. This bill builds from the momentum of the Green Fee by continuing to encourage capital projects with clear sustainability outcomes that safeguarding the natural assets that are integral to our economy, culture, and environment. HB 2602's matching grant approach leverages local and private participation, encouraging collaboration and greater collective investment in infrastructure that benefits tourism and community alike.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 2602 HD1 Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to

foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.



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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
Tuesday - February 17, 2026 - 9:30am

Hawai'i Bicycling League Supports HB 2602, HD1, Relating to Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure, with Suggested Amendment

Aloha Chair Lowen Vice Chair Perruso, 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 2602, HD1 to create a matching grant program within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to support voluntary sustainability and climate resilience investments in visitor industry infrastructure.

As a recognized expert in active transportation in Hawai'i, and the producer for the largest cycling events in the islands, which has welcomed tens of thousands of visitors for more than four decades, we want to make sure that local bicycling infrastructure and programming is equitably supported with access to grant programs like the one proposed in this bill.

Recent shifts in destination management for our visitor industry have potentially deprioritized bicycling, which will lead to reduced economic impact of sports tourism and the particular benefits of investing in bicycling infrastructure and programming. As such, we propose amendments to this bill to ensure that the visitor industry is inclusive and receptive to measuring the impact of bicycling. Moreover, bicycling and reducing vehicle miles traveled are key components of the Navahine Settlement as established in HDOT's 2025 [Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan](#) (ESWRP)

The ESWRP mentions bikeshare, currently available as Biki (O'ahu) and HIBike (Hawai'i) at least 10 times. These privately operated networks which serve visitors and residents with on-demand bikeshare infrastructure are an important way to reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions. Investing in electrification of bikeshare fleets could get more visitors to mode shift away from reliance on rental cars.

Currently, there are no electric bikes operating as part of these fleets. However, on Hawai'i there is a fleet of approximately 24 bikes sitting in storage, because the operator cannot fully fund the deployment of docks and insurance.

As a nonprofit focused on delivering bicycle education and programming for the visitor industry, HBL would also like to see our own one-time sustainable infrastructure investments recognized for grant.

matching as an “eligible applicant,” under this proposed legislation. As such, we propose a new amendment to make this possible.

NEW PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Page 6, section (h) (5)

Line 1 after the words “visitor-serving facilities” add “such as bikeshare networks and operators and private nonprofit organizations doing similar work.”

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.

Respectfully,

Eduardo Hernandez
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Bicycling League