



The Judiciary, State of Hawai'i
Ka 'Oihana Ho'okolokolo, Moku'āina 'o Hawai'i

Testimony to the Thirty-Third Legislature, 2026 Regular Session

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

Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 9:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

By

Michelle Acosta
Deputy Chief Court Administrator, Hawai'i State Judiciary

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

Bill No. and Title: Senate Bill No. 2009, SD2, Relating to Motor Vehicles.

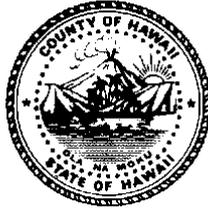
Purpose: Requires new number plates and tags or emblems for used motor vehicles transferred between private individuals. Requires each county Director of Finance to notify all applicable state and local agencies upon receipt of official notification of a vehicle transfer from a transferor. Requires each county Director of Finance to establish a centralized notification system for applicable agencies for every vehicle transfer by 7/1/2028. (SD2)

Judiciary's Position:

The Judiciary provides the following comments. As currently written, the measure would take effect immediately upon approval. The Judiciary respectfully requests that the effective date be set no earlier than January 1, 2027. This additional time is critical to ensure proper implementation by the courts which would include necessary updates to the Judiciary Information Management System (JIMS) and to the traffic payment system, and the adjustment of operational resources to account for a possible increase to the traffic court calendar.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2009.

C. Kimo Alameda, Ph.D.
Mayor



William V. Brillhante, Jr.
Managing Director

Merrick Nishimoto
Deputy Managing Director

County of Hawai'i ~ Office of the Mayor

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

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

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 9:30 A.M.
State Capitol Conference Room 430 & Videoconference

In consideration of
Senate Bill 2009, SD2
Relating to Motor Vehicles

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

The County of Hawai'i respectfully opposes Senate Bill 2009, SD2, which would require used motor vehicle transfers between private individuals to obtain new license plate numbers, tags, or emblems at the time of transfer. While the measure appears intended to address liability concerns associated with vehicle ownership transfers, it would not eliminate liability for prior owners. When a new owner fails to transfer the vehicle into their name and later incurs citations or abandons the vehicle, enforcement agencies typically identify the vehicle using the vehicle identification number, regardless of whether the license plate has been changed.

This measure would place additional burdens on the public by requiring both buyers and sellers to complete additional steps beyond the current transfer process. Private vehicle transactions, which are common and routine, would require additional time, coordination, and potentially in-person visits to motor vehicle registration offices. These requirements could create unnecessary inconvenience for residents and may delay the completion of otherwise straightforward private vehicle sales.

In addition, the proposal may increase demand for motor vehicle registration services and require additional administrative processing without addressing the underlying issue of untimely vehicle registration by new owners. Requiring the prior owner to remove license plates, tags, or emblems at the time of transfer may also create a period during which the vehicle cannot be legally operated, potentially resulting in vehicles being driven on public roadways without proper registration while new plates are obtained.

For these reasons, the County of Hawai'i respectfully opposes this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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

ADMINISTRATION

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March 16, 2026

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

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

SUBJECT: S.B. No. 2009, S.D. 2 - Relating To Motor Vehicles
HEARING: Tuesday, March 17, 2026, 9:30 a.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD) respectfully **opposes** this bill and offers comments for your committee's consideration. Pursuant to Section 6-402 of the Revised Charter of the City and County of Honolulu, CSD Division of Motor Vehicle Registration (DMV) administers the motor vehicle registration program for the island of O'ahu. While CSD appreciates the intent of the proposed legislation, we have concerns regarding its application and its legal implications.

CSD is sensitive to some transferors having persistent liability on vehicles for which title and possession have been transferred, specifically where the transferee fails to endorse and submit the vehicle's title to CSD DMV within a specified period of time.

S.B. No. 2009, S.D. 2 would require each county Director of Finance to notify all applicable state and local agencies of every vehicle transfer and to establish an automatic and instantaneous centralized notification system by July 1, 2028. In practice, this requirement raises multiple issues which cause us to oppose this legislation.

First, the bill assumes the existence of a single, uniform, and compatible system across all counties and agencies. Currently, county motor vehicle systems are not fully integrated with all state and local enforcement, judicial and administrative systems. Developing a centralized, real-time notification platform capable of interfacing with multiple counties and independent agencies would require substantial system redesign, data-sharing agreements, cybersecurity safeguards and ongoing technical support.

Second, the requirement for notification upon receipt of transfer documentation introduces legal risks and administrative concerns. Transfer notices are often incomplete, inaccurate, or later determined to be invalid. Automatically transmitting unverified information to multiple agencies could result in enforcement errors, data integrity issues and increased disputes, ultimately undermining the very protections the bill seeks to provide.

Third, the bill does not identify a funding source to design, build, test, implement, and maintain such a system. The cost of creating an automatic and instantaneous notification system would be significant and would likely divert limited county resources from core customer service and compliance functions. Without dedicated funding, counties would be required to absorb these costs at the expense of other mandated services.

Fourth, the bill shifts responsibility for enforcement outcomes from transferees to county agencies without addressing the underlying compliance issues. Existing law already places affirmative obligations on transferees to complete the transfer process. CSD believes that improved enforcement of existing requirements, including clearer public guidance and targeted statutory refinements may better address the problem without imposing broad and costly system upgrades on counties.

S.B. No. 2009, S.D. 2 would also require private sellers to surrender existing license plates at the time of sale and require buyers to obtain new plates, tags, and emblems within seven days. This represents a significant departure from Hawai'i's current registration framework and would substantially increase DMV transaction volume, in-person visits, and processing demands.

Not only would the bill increase costs for customers by requiring the purchase of new plates and registration materials for every private transfer, it would also increase costs to the State and the counties associated with license plate production, inventory management, disposal, staffing, technology, and rulemaking. These impacts are not currently funded.

Finally, the bill raises enforcement and public safety concerns during the interim period when vehicles may be operated without license plates, and it places compliance burdens on private individuals without clear safeguards.

Testimony for S.B. No. 2009, S.D. 2

March 16, 2026

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While CSD recognizes the goal of protecting sellers from post-sale liability, this issue may be more effectively addressed through improvements to existing transfer and notification processes rather than a universal new-plate requirement.

For the reasons above, CSD **opposes** S.B. No. 2009, S.D. 2 as drafted. CSD remains willing to work with the Legislature and stakeholders to explore alternative solutions that protect transferors while remaining operationally feasible and fiscally responsible for the counties.

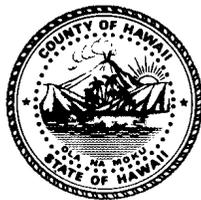
Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on S.B. No. 2009, S.D. 2.

Sincerely,

for Kimberly M. Hashiro
Director

C. Kimo Alameda,
Ph.D.
Mayor

William V. Brilhante Jr.
Managing Director



Diane Nakagawa
Director

Malia A. Kekai
Deputy Director

County of Hawai'i

Finance Department

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Testimony of
Naomi O'Dell
VRL Administrator

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

Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 9:30 a.m.
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In consideration of
Senate Bill 2009, SD2
Relating to Motor Vehicles

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

The County of Hawai'i respectfully opposes Senate Bill 2009, relating to motor vehicles. This measure would require used motor vehicle transfers between private individuals to obtain new license plate numbers, tags, or emblems at the time of transfer. While the intent of the measure appears to be reducing liability exposure for prior vehicle owners, it is unlikely to achieve that objective in practice. Vehicles are routinely traceable through the Vehicle Identification Number (VIN), which remains permanently associated with the vehicle regardless of any change in license plates.

The proposed requirement may also create unintended operational and administrative challenges for our Vehicle Registration and Licensing Division. Requiring new license plates upon each ownership transfer will likely increase the number of in-person visits to motor vehicle registration offices. This would contribute to longer wait times and increase the administrative workload for registration staff who must process additional plate issuance transactions that are not currently required under the existing transfer process.

Additionally, the requirement would place increased demand on license plate inventory and production, as new plates would need to be issued with every ownership change rather than remaining with the vehicle. This could result in higher administrative costs and additional strain on existing inventory management systems.

For these reasons, the County of Hawai'i respectfully opposes this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.