

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

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February 19, 2026

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
State Capitol, Conference Room 016
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice Chair Gabbard, and Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary:

SUBJECT: S.B. No. 2079 - Relating To Vehicle Titles
HEARING: Tuesday, February 24, 2026, 10:00 a.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD) **opposes** this bill and has serious concerns 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 (DMV) administers the motor vehicle registration program for the island of O'ahu. While CSD DMV understands the intent of this measure is to provide relief to individuals who possess vehicles without standard title documentation, we have significant concerns regarding the bill's legal, operational, and public safety implications.

S.B. No. 2079 would require the county Director of Finance to issue a temporary, three-year certificate of title based on an affidavit of ownership, limited documentation, and the posting of a surety bond. While the bill includes safeguards such as a bond requirement and a waiting period prior to conversion to a full title, the proposed framework shifts critical determinations of ownership away from documented chain-of-title requirements that currently protect vehicle owners, lienholders, and the public.

From an administrative perspective, the bill places the Director of Finance and county DMV offices in the position of adjudicating disputed or unclear ownership claims

without sufficient investigatory or legal authority and resources to verify competing interests. DMV operations are designed to process transactions supported by clear statutory documentation—not to resolve ownership disputes that may involve fraud, theft, civil claims, or unresolved liens. The bill would expose county agencies to increased legal risk, inconsistent outcomes, and potential challenges from prior owners or lienholders.

CSD DMV is also concerned that the proposed temporary title process could be vulnerable to abuse. Reliance on affidavits and possession-based claims, even when paired with a surety bond, creates opportunities for fraudulent or improper titling of vehicles. Once a temporary title is issued, downstream impacts may include improper registration, insurance coverage complications, enforcement challenges, and confusion for subsequent purchasers who may rely on the apparent legitimacy of a county-issued title.

Operationally, implementation of this bill would require new procedures, staff training, legal review, coordination with law enforcement, and ongoing tracking of temporary titles and bond expiration dates. These additional responsibilities would significantly increase workload for DMV offices without identified funding, staffing, or system support.

CSD DMV also notes that existing statutes already provide mechanisms to address many title-related issues while preserving mutual attestation, accountability, and clear ownership standards. CSD DMV has been actively engaged with legislators on targeted solutions that balance relief for good-faith parties with protections against fraud and unintended liability.

For these reasons, CSD DMV respectfully **opposes** S.B. No. 2079 and encourages continued dialogue to explore alternative approaches that maintain the integrity of Hawai'i's vehicle title system while addressing legitimate hardship cases in a more narrowly tailored and administratively feasible manner.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on S.B. No. 2079.

Sincerely,

for Kimberly M. Hashiro
Director

SB-2079

Submitted on: 2/22/2026 10:06:15 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/24/2026 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Compton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The proposed bill should be passed because it remedies an unintended side effect of earlier legislation that was passed with good intentions, but time has shown it inadvertently put a lot of people without the protection of the laws and subject to penalties charged for something beyond their control. This bill is a simple fix that will help many law-abiding men and women comply with safety regulations.

Aloha,
Jules