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GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
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## Testimony of the Public Utilities Commission

To the  
Senate Committee on  
Transportation

February 12, 2026  
3:01 p.m.

Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee:

**Measure:** S.B. No. 2400  
**Title:** RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION.

### Position:

The Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") offers the following comments for consideration.

### Comments:

The Commission supports the intent of this measure to exempt wing-in-ground craft from the Commission's jurisdiction.

The Commission notes that wing-in-ground craft will likely be regulated by the U.S. Coast Guard for the purpose of safety. The Commission also believes that the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") may have some oversight in regulating wing-in-ground operations.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee.

My name is Michael Proulx, and I am here today to testify in strong support of SB2400. I am the Regional Director for North America at REGENT Craft. REGENT is the developer and manufacturer of all-electric Wing-in-Ground craft, known as Seagliders, which are a new mode of transportation that combines sea and air travel to create a high-speed, efficient, accessible transportation solution to move passengers and cargo between coastal communities.

In my role at REGENT, I've had the unique opportunity to join a collection of local community stakeholders right here in Hawai'i to form an organization called The Hawai'i Seaglider Initiative, or HSI. HSI membership spans across multiple sectors, from large transportation giants like Hawaiian and Southwest Airlines, to prominent community leaders like Kamehameha Schools and the Hawaiian Council, to agriculture and energy, and hospitality and healthcare. Over the past two years, this coalition has met regularly to discuss the fundamental transportation and logistics challenges facing the islands. It's clear that Hawai'i's reliance on limited, inefficient, carbon-intensive inter-island transportation networks hampers equitable economic growth in all communities.

HSI has identified three main pillars, or benefits, that Seagliders bring to the state:

1. The first is **Decarbonization**: Seagliders directly support the state goal of 100% clean energy by 2045 by fostering a zero-emission alternative to fossil-fuel-burning flights.
2. The second is **Access & Equity**: Seagliders provide a new, high-speed lifeline for underserved communities, improving access to critical healthcare on O'ahu and lowering the cost of travel for local families.
3. The third is **Resiliency**: In times of emergency, Seagliders can provide rapid response to areas that are currently difficult to reach.

SB2400 represents an important step in achieving these milestones identified by the Hawai'i community. The bill recognizes that Seagliders are not massive cargo ships, or slow-moving ferries, but their own class of innovative vessels. Subjecting them to the same Public Utilities Commission regulations as heavy water carriers would create unnecessary red tape, stifle innovation, drive-up costs for a service meant to be affordable for all residents, and subject the PUC to divert attention and resources away from their current mandate of responsibilities, which is to set just and reasonable rates so a monopoly doesn't over charge. Considering Seagliders' unique modes of travel, the vessels will function within a market ripe with competition in the transportation space where price competition is essential to success.

Hawai'i has a unique opportunity to lead the world in sustainable maritime technology while making life easier for local communities. I urge this committee to pass SB2400. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**Written Statement of  
Trung Lam, Executive Director**

before the

**Senate Committee on Transportation**

State Capitol, Conference Room 229

Thursday, February 12, 2026 3:01 PM

In consideration of

**SB2400**

Chair Inouye; Vice Chair Elefante and Members of the Committees.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support** of **SB2400**, which would exempt wing-in-ground (WIG) craft—commonly known as *Seaglidors*—from regulation under the Hawai'i Water Carriers Act (HRS 271G). This legislation is timely, necessary, and aligned with Hawai'i's climate, transportation, economic development, and resilience priorities.

This bill correctly highlights several statewide benefits of Seaglidors which include zero operational emissions, additional rapid interisland travel opportunities for healthcare, essential services, and employment. This is especially critical for neighbor island residents who rely on Oahu's medical facilities. Seaglidors also enhance resilience and emergency response operations by reaching communities isolated by disasters, support humanitarian missions, and strengthen food and medical supply continuity.

**Workforce & Economic Development**

The growth of a Seaglider industry in Hawai'i aligns with Hawai'i's and HTDC broader economic diversification goals of strengthening Hawai'i's innovation economy, creating high-skilled jobs, attracting sustainable infrastructure investment, and positioning the state as a global leader in clean maritime-aviation technologies

**PUC Regulation Is Not Necessary and Would Slow Deployment**

Chapter 271G, Hawaii Revised Statutes, was devised to regulate traditional maritime shipping, ensuring continuity of service, preventing monopolistic practices, and overseeing tariffs and rates. It is not designed or intended for federally regulated craft like Seaglidors. Further no other state imposes PUC type regulations for water transportation this way. They rely upon:

- U.S. Coast Guard to provide consumer protection oversight for WIG craft.
- Federal maritime laws for vessel classification



- State boating laws for basic operational rules (navigation, speed limits, environmental rules)
- Seagliders are intended to complement air travel, not compete as water carriers as was the purpose of HRS 271G.

Applying HRS 271G would impose duplicative and costly regulation without improving safety, environmental, or consumer protection. Exempting WIG craft aligns Hawai'i's regulatory framework with federal jurisdiction and with how WIG and other aviation-adjacent technologies are treated nationwide. This legislation is not about favoring one company or technology—it is about removing structural barriers which prevent Hawai'i from adopting zero-emission transportation solutions.

SB2400 is a forward-looking, climate-aligned, and economically beneficial measure that modernizes Hawai'i's regulatory landscape to support clean, efficient, and resilient interisland transportation. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to pass this legislation.

Mahalo for your leadership and for the opportunity to provide testimony.





**LATE**

Senator Lorraine Inouye  
Senate Transportation Chair  
State Capitol Rm 210  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Maritime Institute, we write in strong support of the Senate Bill 2400, which would exempt wing-in-ground effect craft, commonly known as Seagliders, from the jurisdiction of the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission.

As an organization focused on workforce and economic development in Hawai'i, we are particularly encouraged by the role this emerging transportation technology can play in creating high-quality local jobs and expanding career opportunities for Hawai'i's residents, especially young people seeking pathways into skilled, future-oriented industries.

The development and operation of wing-in-ground craft will require a broad range of talent, including technicians, electricians, maritime and aviation-adjacent mechanics, operations and logistics specialists, software and systems technicians, infrastructure workers, and administrative and management professionals. These roles align well with existing workforce training programs, union apprenticeships, community college pathways, and employer-led upskilling efforts already underway across the State.

By enabling this new mode of transportation to operate under an appropriate regulatory framework, the Legislature can help catalyze investment, accelerate deployment, and create the conditions for long-term job growth in Hawai'i's clean transportation and green economy sectors. Importantly, these are careers that can provide living wages, clear advancement pathways, and opportunities for local residents to build long-term futures without having to leave the State.

For Hawai'i's young people in particular, Seaglider-related industries represent an opportunity to engage in cutting-edge technology while staying rooted in their home communities. Supporting innovation-driven job creation is essential to retaining talent, reversing brain drain, and ensuring that Hawai'i's workforce is prepared for the next generation of transportation, energy, and infrastructure systems.

Exempting wing-in-ground craft from Public Utilities Commission jurisdiction is a necessary step to allow this industry to develop efficiently and responsibly. As outlined in the legislation, safety and consumer protections are already overseen at the federal level, and additional regulatory burden would risk slowing job creation and discouraging investment at a critical early stage.

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For these reasons, the Maritime Institute supports the passage of the Senate Bill 2400 and applauds the Legislature for advancing policies that promote innovation, economic opportunity, and workforce development in the best interest of Hawai'i's people.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "DAVE ABRAMS", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Dave Abrams  
CEO  
Maritime Institute



February 12, 2026

The Honorable Lorraine Inouye, Chair  
The Honorable Brandon Elefante, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Transportation

**Re: SB 2400 – RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION**

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee:

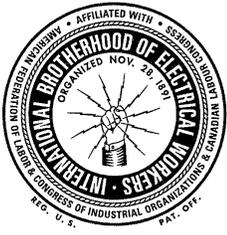
Hawaii Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to support SB 2400, which exempts persons operating wing-in-ground craft from the application of the Hawai'i Water Carriers Act. Defines "wing-in-ground craft."

HMSA appreciates the legislature exploring new means and technologies, to increase access for our residents. Hawaii's unique geographic nature can exacerbate challenges in cost and timeliness for especially our neighbor island residents who require care on Oahu. We hope that sea gliders can be one of many solutions to address this need in our State.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this measure.

Sincerely,

Walden Au  
Director of Government Relations



# International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

LOCAL UNION NO. 1186 • Affiliated with AFL-CIO

1935 HAU STREET, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor • HONOLULU, HI 96819-5003  
TELEPHONE (808) 847-5341 • FAX (808) 847-2224

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
Hearing on Thursday, February 12, 2026 at 3:01 p.m., Conference Room 229

RE: TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF SB 2400

Honorable Chair Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair Brandon J.C. Elefante, and Members of the Committee on Transportation:

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1186 (IBEW 1186), is comprised of over 2,700 men and women working in electrical construction, telecommunications, civil service employees, and educator and faculty associations.

As a union dedicated to the advancement of Hawaii's workforce and the pursuit of the State's 100% renewable energy goals, we recognize that Seagliderters represent the future in clean, zero-emission interisland transportation. We **support SB 2400** as it provides the necessary regulatory clarity to allow this innovative industry to take flight without the redundant oversight of the Public Utilities Commission, which is better suited for traditional water carriers.

The deployment of Seagliderters will create high-quality, high-paying jobs for technicians, electricians, and systems specialists. Our members are ready to provide the skilled labor needed to build and maintain the electrical infrastructure and charging systems required for these vessels.

With public safety already overseen at the federal level, exempting these crafts from the Hawaii Water Carriers Act prevents unnecessary costs that would otherwise discourage investment in our State, and slow potential job creation. We believe that by passing SB 2400, the Legislature will stimulate investment in our green economy and ensure our workforce is prepared for the next generation of transportation.

We respectfully urge your committee to pass SB 2400. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Feb. 12, 2026, 3:01 p.m.

Hawaii State Capitol

Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

**To: Senate Committee on Transportation**

**Sen. Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair**

**Sen. Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice-Chair**

**From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii**

**Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns**

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB2400 — RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

Aloha chair, vice chair and other committee members,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **supports** [SB2400](#), which would exempt operators of wing-in-ground craft, or “seaglidors,” from the state Public Utility Commission’s water carrier regulations.

Seaglidors have the potential to revolutionize transportation in Hawaii by providing a low-cost, low-carbon and high-speed way to get between islands. They could fill an important niche in Hawaii’s transportation network and make it easier for residents to access healthcare, education and economic opportunities.

Seaglidors are vessels that can operate on water while in harbors and fly above the water while in transit. They glide at extremely low altitudes over the water to take advantage of the ground effect.

The ground effect is a phenomenon in which an aircraft’s wings generate less drag when the aircraft is close to a surface, such as water. This makes seaglidors more efficient than conventional planes.

Unfortunately, current law makes it unnecessarily difficult to operate seaglidors in Hawaii. Because seaglidors can operate on water while in harbors, they are regulated as water carriers, even though they operate more like aircraft.

Under the state’s water carrier law, most seaglider operators would have to receive a certificate of public convenience and necessity from the state Public Utilities Commission before operating in Hawaii. Receiving a

certificate from the commission is a long and difficult process that would act as a significant barrier to entry for seaglider operators.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, seaglider operators would have to receive the commission's approval before modifying their routes or changing the rates that they charge customers. This would make it difficult for seaglider operators to keep up with the rapid pace of change in an emerging market.

Furthermore, this measure would not cause safety risks for Hawaii residents who might use seagliders in the future. As the bill notes, the U.S. Coast Guard already has regulations in place to ensure the safe operation of seagliders, making further regulation by the state Public Utilities Commission unnecessary.

Seagliders could elevate the quality of life in Hawaii, but if we want them to take off, we need to give them enough room to extend their wings.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas  
Director of Strategic Campaigns  
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

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<sup>1</sup> ["PUC Case 2004-0180,"](#) Hawaii Public Utilities Commission, accessed February 10, 2026.

**February 9, 2026**

Senator Lorraine Inouye  
Chair, Senate Committee on Transportation  
State Capitol, Room 210  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Aloha e Chair Inouye, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

Our islands must continue to seek innovative and sustainable alternatives for inter-island transportation, which is why I am in strong support of SB2400.

Regent Craft's seaglider technology directly addresses critical environmental concerns. It is fully electric, capable of utilizing renewable energy sources, and is projected to operate at approximately one-third the cost of conventional aviation and marine transportation options. This represents a significant opportunity to reduce emissions while improving affordability and efficiency.

Seagliders will also allow us to better serve underserved communities by expanding access through our harbor system, helping to alleviate congestion at our airports and providing more centralized points of access on each island. This flexibility enables the development of route structures that more effectively connect our islands to essential services such as healthcare, as well as supporting food sustainability and the delivery of fresher local products.

Allowing seagliders to operate exempt from Public Utilities Commission jurisdiction will foster a more competitive inter-island transportation environment—one that ultimately benefits the people of Hawai'i through increased options, improved access, and lower costs.

For these reasons, I strongly support SB2400 and respectfully ask for your leadership in advancing this measure so that our communities may benefit from this innovative alternative form of transportation.

Mahalo for your consideration,

David Uchiyama  
Former President & CEO  
Island Air

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**SB-2400**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 9:37:31 AM

Testimony for TRS on 2/12/2026 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Justin Puaoi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lorraine Inouye,

I am a Local and feel that the Sea Glider will be an asset to the people of Hawaii, with that I am in support of Bill 2400 and would like to keep the process on the same track as it is going.

Mahalo nui,

Justin P.

**SB-2400**

Submitted on: 2/9/2026 10:30:37 AM

Testimony for TRS on 2/12/2026 3:01:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Thomas Aimoku McClellan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Thomas Aimoku McClellan and I am submitting this testimony as an individual in support of allowing seaglider type craft to operate within the State of Hawaii without scrutiny from the PUC. The technology on which the sea glider is based on is solar powered and allows for the aircraft to spend little time on the ocean surface; predominantly taxing in and out of harbor base. Costs for interisland travel, espeically in the case of emergencies, will be significantly lower than that of current providers. We need carriers based on these types of technologies to be encouraged and supported, not hindered by unnecessary regulations and oversight.