



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

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

9:00 AM

State Capitol, 430

SB2896, SD1
RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES

Senate Committee on Transportation

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is in strong support of S.B. 2896, S.D. 1, which seeks to lower the minimum age for obtaining a commercial driver's license from twenty-one to eighteen years of age, repeals the requirement that a person only operates category 3 vehicles to qualify for a commercial license, and requires the Department of Transportation to amend its rules accordingly.

This legislation aligns with the DOT's commitment to balancing workforce development needs with public safety. By lowering the qualifying age to eighteen, the bill enables more young drivers to enter the commercial transportation sector earlier, addressing potential labor shortages in the industry while ensuring that all drivers meet rigorous federal and state standards. As stated in Section 1 of the bill, persons must still comply with Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations part 390–396, subpart B, except section 391.11(b)(1), in the case of intrastate drivers involved in intrastate commerce. This ensures that even younger drivers are held to high federal safety standards.

Additionally, the removal of the category 3 vehicle restriction allows for greater flexibility in hiring and training, particularly for drivers who may be transitioning into commercial driving roles. The bill also includes important safety safeguards, such as requiring drivers to have held a category 3 state driver's license for the two years prior to driving commercially and prohibiting those with certain traffic convictions including speeding excessively, reckless driving, or unsafe lane changes from operating commercial vehicles. These provisions help maintain accountability and reduce risk.

Furthermore, in coordination with the commercial driving community, the DOT requests the following amendments to HRS 286-102.3, which matches amendments made to HB1696, HD2, which is the companion bill:

"~~[[§286-102.3]]~~ Commercial drivers under the age of twenty-one. A person ~~[is qualified to]~~ may drive commercially in the State in intrastate commerce if the person:

- (1) Is at least ~~[nineteen]~~ eighteen years of age;

(2) Is in compliance with title 49 Code of Federal Regulations[,] part 390-396, subpart B, except section 391.11(b)(1) in the case of an intrastate driver involved in intrastate commerce in the State;

~~[(3) Only operates a category 3 vehicle as defined in section 286-102(b)(3);~~

~~(4) (3) [Shall] Does not transport hazardous materials [as defined in section 286-2, nor] or passengers in a school vehicle as defined in section 286-181; [and]~~

~~[(5)] (4) Has had a category 3 state driver's license for the two years immediately preceding driving commercially under this section, with the following conditions:~~

- ~~(A) Has not had any license suspended, revoked, or canceled; and~~
- ~~(B) Has not had any conviction for:~~
 - ~~(i) Speeding excessively involving any speed of fifteen miles per hour or more above the speed limit;~~
 - ~~(ii) Driving recklessly, as defined by state or local law or regulation, including but not limited to offenses of driving a motor vehicle in wilful or wanton disregard for the safety of person or property;~~
 - ~~(iii) Making improper or erratic traffic lane changes;~~
 - ~~(iv) Following the vehicle ahead too closely; or~~
 - ~~(v) Violating state or local law relating to motor vehicle traffic control, excluding parking violations, arising in connection with a fatal accident[.]; and~~

~~(5) Is under twenty-one years of age and actively enrolled in a commercial motor vehicle solely through an employer-sponsored commercial driver training program with a minimum driver training requirement of one-hundred seventy hours of behind-the-wheel training[state approved commercial driver training program or registered apprenticeship program as determined by the department of labor and industrial relations]; provided that a driver under twenty-one years of age shall not operate a commercial motor vehicle outside the scope, supervision, or duration of the employer-sponsored program and the employer shall keep and retain records of the training subject to enforcement review[approved training or apprenticeship program].~~

~~[For the purposes of this paragraph, "state approved commercial driver training program or registered apprenticeship program" means a program approved or recognized by, or registered with, the department of labor and industrial relations, including programs registered pursuant to chapter 372 or other workforce development programs authorized by the department.]"~~

The above changes will allow for all commercial drivers, not just CDL holders, to engage in proper driver training so that any driver, from class 3 and 4 holders to CDL holders, will better understand the handling of their work vehicle in a safe manner. The provision to keep and retain records for enforcement review will assist any governmental entity tasked with oversight of commercial vehicle regulation, accident investigation, or related, to best determine compliance with this requirement as it relates to safety enforcement or accident investigation.

To ensure state compliance with the under 21 CDL, the DOT recommends amending HRS 286-236(a)(1) and adding subsection (i) with the following language below:

HRS 286-236(a)(1):

(a) No person shall be issued a commercial driver's license unless that person:
(1) Meets the qualification standards of title 49 Code of Federal Regulations, part 391, subparts B and E; provided that for issuance of a commercial driver's license to an applicant who is eighteen years of age or older but under twenty-one years of age, compliance with title 49 Code of Federal Regulations section 391.11(b)(1) (minimum age) shall not be required if the license is restricted to intrastate operation pursuant to subsection (i);

HRS 286-236(i):

(i) Intrastate licenses for applicants under twenty-one. Notwithstanding subsection (a)(1) and title 49 Code of Federal Regulations section 391.11(b)(1), the examiner of drivers may issue a commercial driver's license to a person who is eighteen years of age or older but under twenty-one years of age if:

(1) The license bears the "K" restriction indicating operation is limited to intrastate commerce, as described in section 286-239(b)(9);

(2) The applicant meets all other state and federal requirements applicable to the license class and endorsements sought, including medical certification (49 C.F.R. part 391), entry-level driver training (49 C.F.R. part 380), knowledge and skills testing (49 C.F.R. part 383), and controlled substances and alcohol use and testing (49 C.F.R. part 382); and

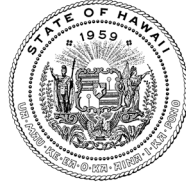
A license issued under this subsection shall not authorize operation in interstate commerce.

The DOT supports this legislative effort because it promotes a more inclusive and responsive approach to workforce development without compromising safety. The proposed changes reflect modern industry demands and provide a pathway for qualified individuals to contribute to Hawaii's transportation infrastructure.

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHAHA

March 24, 2026

To: The Honorable Darius K. Kila, Chair,
The Honorable Tyson K. Miyake, Vice Chair, and
Members of the House Committee on Transportation

Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2026
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Place: Conference Room 430, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

Re: S.B. 2896 SD1 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSE

The DLIR **supports the intent** of this measure and offers comments. The DLIR defers to the Department of Transportation as the lead agency on the responsibilities assigned to it under the bill as amended. The DLIR supports and can carry out the duties assigned to the department in the SD1.

This measure lowers the minimum age for individuals who may drive commercially within the State from nineteen to eighteen, provided that any driver under the age of twenty-one does not operate a commercial vehicle outside the scope, supervision, or duration of an approved training or apprenticeship program.

While lowering the minimum age for commercial driving is expected to expand the pool of eligible commercial drivers and benefit the State, the DLIR is concerned that the existing shortage of commercial driver license examiners may be exacerbated.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important matter.



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, MANAGING DIRECTOR
HAWAII TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION
March 24, 2026
SB 2896 SD1 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES.**

Aloha Chair Kila and members of the House Committee on Transportation. I am Tina Yamaki, Managing Director of the Hawaii Transportation Association and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Hawaii Transportation Association (HTA Hawaii) was founded in 1938 and incorporated in 1963, and is a private, non-profit trade organization dedicated to the service and assistance to the commercial ground transportation industry in the State of Hawaii. Our members include family owned small and medium sized businesses, independent owner operators, and national motor carriers range from delivery services to passenger carriers - as well as allied industry partners.

HTA Hawaii strongly supports SB 2896 SD1. This measure lowers the age of who may drive commercially within the State from nineteen to eighteen; repeals the requirement that a person only operates category 3 vehicles to qualify to drive commercially in the State; prohibits a person under twenty-one years of age from operating a commercial motor vehicle outside of state-approved commercial driver training programs or registered apprenticeship programs as determined by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations; and requires the Department of Transportation to consult with DLIR to amend its rules to allow persons under twenty-one years of age to operate a commercial motor vehicle under certain conditions.

This measure represents a responsible workforce development strategy that expands the commercial driver pipeline while maintaining appropriate oversight and safety controls. Hawaii's supply chain and service economy depend heavily on intrastate commercial transportation, and creating earlier entry pathways into the profession is both economically and operationally prudent.

We do have concerns with language in the current bill requiring that a person under twenty-one may operate a commercial motor vehicle **ONLY** if that person is actively enrolled in a commercial driver training program or registered apprenticeship program. If an individual has already completed and successfully passed an approved training program, requiring continued "active enrollment" may be unnecessarily restrictive and administratively burdensome.

The objective should be competency and completion and not continuous enrollment status. Once a driver has (1) Successfully completed a state-approved commercial driver training or apprenticeship program; (2) Satisfied all licensing requirements; (3) Demonstrated proficiency through required examinations; and (4) Met all DOT and DLIR regulatory standards, there appears to be no compelling rationale to prohibit lawful operation solely because the individual is no longer formally enrolled.

We recommend amending the language to allow individuals under twenty-one to operate a commercial motor vehicle if they have **either successfully completed** a CDL driving program **or are actively participating in one**, subject to any supervision or graduated restrictions deemed appropriate by DOT.

Additionally, we continue to support the inclusion of **requiring employers to provide a minimum of 320 hours of documented training**, with maintained records subject to review. Clear documentation and accountability mechanisms will ensure the integrity of the program while supporting workforce expansion. We want to be sure that these new drivers are accustomed to the vehicles that they will be driving and not just simulators or "drivers education trucks"

SB 2896, SD1 strikes an appropriate balance between safety and workforce development. With clarification to focus on successful completion rather than continuous enrollment status, the measure will be both practical and effective.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

SB-2896-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/20/2026 1:51:47 PM

Testimony for TRN on 3/24/2026 9:00:00 AM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

2896 SB RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES.

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

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: March 23, 2026

RE: Senate Bill 2896 SD1
Measure Title: RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES.
Report Title: DOT; DLIR; Commercial Driver's Licenses; Minimum Age;
Commercial Driver Training Programs; Apprenticeship Programs

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support Senate Bill 2896 SD1. Your consideration is appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore