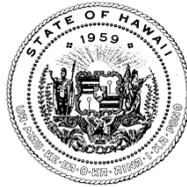


JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
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**STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I**  
**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU**  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

Thursday, February 12, 2026  
3:01 PM  
State Capitol, 229

SB2896  
**RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES**

Senate Committee on Transportation

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) is in strong support of Senate Bill 2896, which seeks to lower the minimum age for obtaining a commercial driver's license from twenty-one to eighteen years of age, and to amend related requirements for intrastate commercial driving in the State of Hawaii.

This legislation aligns with the DOT's commitment to modernizing and streamlining transportation regulations while maintaining public safety standards. By amending Section 286-102.3 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes, the bill permits individuals who are at least eighteen years old and in compliance with applicable federal regulations—including those under 49 CFR part 390-396, subpart B, except section 391.11(b)(1)—to operate commercial vehicles in intrastate commerce. This change reflects a balanced approach that recognizes the increasing maturity and preparedness of young drivers, particularly in states like Hawaii where the workforce needs to adapt to evolving economic demands.

Additionally, the bill repeals the previous restriction requiring drivers to operate only category 3 vehicles prior to qualifying for commercial driving. This modification removes unnecessary barriers and allows for a more flexible progression in driver training and certification, consistent with best practices in driver education and professional development.

The Department supports the mandate for the DOT to adopt or amend rules pursuant to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to implement these changes effectively. Such rulemaking ensures regulatory clarity and consistency, supporting both drivers and employers in navigating the updated framework.

While we acknowledge the importance of safety considerations, the proposed amendments include robust conditions such as requiring a valid category 3 state driver's license for two years prior to commercial operation and prohibiting individuals with certain traffic convictions from operating commercial vehicles. These safeguards help mitigate risk while enabling qualified young drivers to enter the workforce.

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

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

ADMINISTRATION

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February 10, 2026

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Transportation  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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

SUBJECT: S.B. No. 2896 - Relating To Commercial Driver's Licenses  
HEARING: Thursday, February 12, 2026, 3:01 p.m.

The City and County of Honolulu, Department of Customer Services (CSD) respectfully offers testimony in **support** of S.B. No. 2896 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 Vehicles (DMV) administers the motor vehicle driver licensing 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 supports this measure because it provides a meaningful opportunity to strengthen Hawai'i's workforce while maintaining appropriate licensing standards. Lowering the minimum age for an intrastate commercial driver's license to eighteen years of age expands the pool of eligible drivers at a time when many industries are experiencing persistent workforce shortages.

This bill also creates earlier access to structured training and supervised commercial driving experience. Allowing qualified young adults to enter the commercial driving field sooner supports career development, skill-building, and long-term workforce

Testimony for S.B. No. 2896  
February 10, 2026  
Page 2

retention. For many residents, commercial driving offers a stable career path with competitive wages and opportunities for advancement.

From an administrative perspective, aligning state law with federal intrastate allowances provides clarity and consistency in licensing requirements. With appropriate safeguards in place, this measure supports workforce development goals while preserving public safety and regulatory oversight.

For these reasons, the Department of Customer Services **supports** S.B. No. 2896.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on S.B. No. 2896.

Sincerely,

*for* Kimberly M. Hashiro  
Director



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, MANAGING DIRECTOR  
HAWAII TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION  
FEBRUARY 12, 2026  
SB 2896 RELATING TO COMMERCIAL DRIVER'S LICENSES.**

Aloha Chair Inouye and members of the Senate 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. 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; and requires the Department of Transportation to amend its rules to lower the minimum age required for a commercial driver's license.

By lowering the minimum age to eighteen aligns commercial driving eligibility with the age of legal adulthood and high school graduation. This creates a direct workforce pathway for recent graduates, including those completing vocational or technical education programs. Establishing an earlier entry point strengthens the commercial driver pipeline at a time when Hawai'i, like much of the country, continues to experience driver shortages.

We suggest that there be added language that those who are between the ages of 18-20 years old have the companies train them for a minimum of 320 hours as well as keeping record of the training.

In addition, commercial drivers are essential to the movement of goods throughout the State, including food, construction materials, fuel, and medical supplies. Expanding eligibility increases the available labor pool, helping stabilize supply chains, reduce delivery delays, and control transportation-related costs that ultimately affect consumers statewide.

We also want to point out that by requiring the Department of Transportation to amend its rules ensures statutory alignment and administrative clarity. Removing the limitation that only Category 3 vehicles qualify for in-state commercial operation modernizes the framework and eliminates unnecessary barriers that restrict opportunity without clear safety justification.

Furthermore, by allowing eighteen-year-olds to begin commercial driving careers within Hawai'i encourages young residents to remain in the State rather than seek employment opportunities elsewhere. Early career entry promotes skill development, income stability, and long-term employment in a critical industry.

Commercial driving also remains subject to licensing standards, testing requirements, medical certification, and applicable safety regulations. Lowering the age does not eliminate oversight; it simply expands eligibility to qualified individuals who meet existing commercial driver licensing requirements.

Many locally owned trucking, delivery, construction, and transportation companies face workforce constraints. Expanding eligibility helps these businesses recruit and train new drivers, improving operational continuity and competitiveness.

SB 2896 represents a practical workforce solution that strengthens Hawai'i's transportation infrastructure, supports economic resilience, and removes outdated barriers while maintaining regulatory safeguards.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

SB2896

A BILL FOR AN ACT

**LATE**

relating to commercial driver's licenses.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. Section 286-102.3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"~~[[~~§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 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."

**(5) If under twenty-one years of age, is actively enrolled in and operating a commercial motor vehicle solely through a state-approved commercial driver training**

**program or registered apprenticeship program, as determined by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.**

**A commercial driver under the age of twenty-one shall not operate a commercial motor vehicle outside the scope, supervision, or duration of the approved training or apprenticeship program.**

**For purposes of this section, “state-approved commercial driver training program or registered apprenticeship program” means a program approved, recognized, or registered by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, including programs registered pursuant to chapter 372 or other workforce development programs authorized by the department.**

—SECTION 2. The department of transportation shall adopt or amend rules pursuant to chapter 91, Hawaii Revised Statutes, necessary to lower the minimum age required for a commercial driver's license from twenty-one to eighteen.

**SECTION 2. The department of transportation shall adopt or amend rules pursuant to chapter 91, Hawai'i Revised Statutes, as necessary to implement this Act, including licensing, enforcement, and coordination with determinations made by the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations regarding approved training and apprenticeship programs.**

SECTION 3. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

INTRODUCED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

Pane Meatoga III  
Deputy Political Director  
Operating Engineers Local 3  
Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

To: Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair  
Senator Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair  
Committee on Transportation

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 11, 2026

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

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support Senate Bill 2896. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore