

HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

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SYLVIA LUKE
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MARK B. GLICK
CHIEF ENERGY OFFICER

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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
AND
ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Monday, February 09, 2026
3:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

Providing Comments on
SENATE BILL NO. 2905

RELATING TO ENERGY.

Chairs Gabbard and Wakai, Vice Chairs Richards and Chang, and Members of the Committees, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) offers the following comments on Senate Bill No. 2905, which increases the environmental response, energy, and food security tax and the amount collected from the tax that is deposited into the electric vehicle charging system subaccount.

There is no dispute that meeting Hawai'i's decarbonization goals will require significant emissions reductions from ground transportation with Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEVs) as a key strategy as reported in HSEO's *Hawai'i Pathways to Decarbonization report*¹ submitted to the Legislature in December 2023 pursuant to Act 238 (2022). Expanding access to reliable EV charging is also an essential component of this strategy. Currently, Hawai'i has approximately 44 registered EVs per public charging port statewide², the second worst ratio in the nation.

¹ <https://energy.hawaii.gov/what-we-do/clean-energy-vision/decarbonization-strategy/>

² Alliance for Automotive Innovation: Get Connected Electric Vehicle Quarterly Report, Second Quarter 2025

All three mitigation scenarios in the Hawai'i Pathways to Decarbonization report assume Hawai'i will achieve 100% ZEV light-duty vehicle sales by 2035, with 21% of registered light-duty passenger vehicles needing to be ZEVs by 2030. While achieving these goals requires policies that remove barriers to EV adoption, including access to charging infrastructure for residents in affordable housing, HSEO defers to the Department of Budget and Finance on whether imposing a tax is an appropriate means of removing such barriers at this time, as well as the fiscal impacts of this measure to the State budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



STATE OF HAWAII
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
465 S. KING STREET, #103
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

JON S. ITOMURA
CHAIR

NAOMI U. KUWAYE
COMMISSIONER

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Testimony of the Public Utilities Commission

To the
Senate Committees on
Agriculture & Environment
and
Energy & Intergovernmental Affairs

Monday, February 9, 2026
3:00 p.m.

Chairs Gabbard and Wakai, Vice Chairs Richards and Chang, and Members of the Committees:

Measure: S.B. No. 2905
Title: RELATING TO ENERGY

Position:

The Public Utilities Commission ("Commission") supports this measure and offers the following comments for consideration.

Comments:

The Commission supports the intent of this measure to increase the environmental response, energy, and food security tax and the amount collected from the tax that is deposited into the electric vehicle charging system subaccount.

The Commission currently manages the state's Electric Vehicle Charging Station ("EVCS") Rebate Program as established in sections 269-72 and 269-73, Hawaii Revised Statutes ("HRS"), in consultation with Electric Vehicle stakeholders and in cooperation with the program's administrator, Hawaii Energy.

The EVCS Rebate Program has been a successful program for our state, beginning with the pilot program in 2019 to present. From January 2020 through June 2025, Hawaii Energy deployed over \$2.5 million in rebates supporting over 450 new and upgraded EVCS installations across all four counties in Hawaii, and include both Level 2 and DC

Fast Chargers¹. The proposed increase would result in a tax resource of \$0.13 per \$1.15 of tax (increased from \$0.03 currently per \$1.05 of tax). Current program appropriations are \$750,000 per year, and the proposed increase would potentially increase the annual appropriations by over 4 times the current level (projected at over \$3 million per year).

This measure would allow for continued expansion of this successful program, and ensure more substantial deployment of EV charging infrastructure throughout the state in support of the evolving demand from Hawaii's electric vehicle drivers.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

¹ See Hawaii Energy's EVCS Rebate webpage for more information and data:
<https://hawaiienergy.com/for-business/rebates-for-business/electric-vehicle-charging-stations/>

JOSH GREEN M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION

Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau

P.O. BOX 259

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540

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GARY S. SUGANUMA
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**TESTIMONY OF
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. No. 2905, Relating to Energy

BEFORE THE:

Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment, and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

DATE: Monday, February 9, 2026

TIME: 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 224

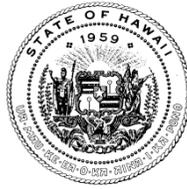
Chairs Gabbard and Wakai, Vice-Chairs Richards, III, and Chang, and Members of the Committees:

The Department of Taxation (DOTAX) offers the following comments regarding S.B. 2905 for your consideration.

S.B. 2905 amends Section 243-3.5, Hawaii Revised Statutes, by increasing the Environmental Response, Energy, and Food Security Tax, commonly referred to as "the barrel tax," from \$1.05 to \$1.15 on each barrel of petroleum product that is not aviation fuel. The bill also increases the allocation of the tax deposited into the electric vehicle charging system subaccount from 3 cents to 13 cents per barrel. This bill would take effect upon approval.

DOTAX recommends an effective date of January 1, 2027. This would allow sufficient time to notify the public, update systems, and make the necessary administrative adjustments, while also giving taxpayers adequate time to prepare for the change.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this measure.



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

Thursday, February 12, 2026
3:10 PM
State Capitol, 224

SB2905
RELATING TO ENERGY

Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment
and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

The Department of Transportation (DOT) supports Senate Bill 2905, relating to the increase of the environmental response, energy, and food security tax, and the allocation of additional funds to the electric vehicle charging system subaccount.

This bill directly lessens one of the main barriers to electric vehicle (EV) adoption, especially for low- and moderate-income households – the availability of public EV charging stations. Additional funding in the electric vehicle charging system subaccount will lead to timely development of additional public EV charging stations, which will encourage more residents and visitors to choose EVs. A greater share of EVs on the road will reduce Hawaii's dependence on imported fuel, reduce emissions, improve air quality, and reduce asthma and other lung conditions.

The DOT's Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan published in October 2025, explains how the transportation sector (including everyone who uses transportation) could meet the state's emission reduction targets established in state law. Without immediate additional investments and implementation of emission reduction strategies, Hawaii will not meet its targets. This bill proposes increased funding for a tangible and proven emissions reduction strategy that will move the state closer to achieving its targets. Electrification is the leading emissions reduction strategy for ground transportation, and expeditious development of public EV charging stations is critical to equitably electrify. The DOT is continuing to build public EV charging stations under its National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Hawaii State Plan. We have developed public charging stations at Kahului Park and Ride, Aloha Tower, and Daniel K. Inouye International Airport. Construction of another station is underway at Kapalua Airport, and we will install additional stations in 2026 and 2027 on Kauai, Molokai, Hawaii Island, Lanai and Oahu. Even with DOT's continued investments, many more public EV charging stations are needed statewide.

The DOT's Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan have three pillars that act as check and balances to develop and prioritize the Plan's strategies: 1) affordability, 2) local energy security, and 3) emissions reduction. While it is clear how additional public EV charging stations would increase local energy security and emissions reduction, it is less obvious how the proposal might impact affordability. Therefore, the remainder of our testimony will provide analysis into how this proposal may impact affordability for residents.

Public EV charging stations play a critical role in advancing equity, and access especially for low and moderate income individuals and communities. Without robust public charging infrastructure, EV adoption remains accessible only to those who can install a charger at home typically higher-income households who own their own home and are often also able to afford rooftop solar. Public EV charging, or workplace EV charging is needed to make EV ownership feasible for this segment of our community. Once low- and moderate-income households have confidence in being able to charge an EV near to where they live or work, they can make the switch to an EV and then realize the cost savings that current EV owners already enjoy. EVs generally have lower "fuel" costs than gas powered vehicles, as well as lower maintenance costs. These benefits should be available to all in our community, and this bill levels the playing field by providing critical public infrastructure.

This bill proposes to increase the environmental response, energy, and food security tax (also known as the "Barrel Tax") from \$1.05 to \$1.15 per barrel of petroleum product and increase the allocation of those revenues into the electric vehicle charging system subaccount from 3 cents per barrel to 13 cents per barrel. An additional 10 cents per barrel in the electric vehicle charging system subaccount will allow installation of additional public EV charging stations.

To understand how the proposed change would affect the average driver in Hawaii, we can use the following hypothetical example. Kimi drives a Toyota Tacoma, a popular model in Hawaii, which has a fuel tank capacity of approximately 20 gallons. Kimi drives to work, her children's school and sports practices, and the beach on the weekends. The current Barrel Tax is \$1.05 per 42-gallon barrel of petroleum products, which equates to 2.5 cents per gallon. Kimi refills her 20-gallon truck every other week, which means each time Kimi refills, she currently pays 50 cents in Barrel Tax (20 gallons x 2.5 cents), which adds up to \$13/year (50 cents x 26 refills/year).

If this bill passes, and the Barrel Tax increases to \$1.15 per 42-gallon barrel, that equates to roughly 2.74 cents per gallon – a \$0.0024 increase per gallon. When Kimi fills up her 20-gallon truck, she would then pay 54.8 cents in Barrel Tax each time (20 gallons x 2.74 cents) - a 4.8-cent increase per full tank refill. Assuming she continues to fill gas every 2 weeks, she would pay roughly \$14.25/year in Barrel Taxes (54.8 cents x 26 refills/year) - a \$1.25 increase total per year.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



FEBRUARY 9, 2026

SENATE BILL 2905

CURRENT REFERRAL: AEN/EIG

808-679-7454
kris@imuaalliance.org
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Kris Coffield,
President

David Negaard,
Director

Mireille Ellsworth,
Director

Justin Salisbury,
Director

Eileen Roco,
Director

Beatrice DeRego,
Director

Corey Rosenlee,
Director

Amy Zhao,
*Policy and Partnerships
Strategist*

POSITION: SUPPORT

Imua Alliance supports SB 2905, relating to energy, which increases the environmental response, energy, and food security tax and the amount collected from the tax that is deposited into the electric vehicle charging system subaccount.

Imua Alliance is a Hawai'i-based organization dedicated to ending exploitation of both people and our planet. Accordingly, as the link between gender violence and the climate crisis is becoming clearer and more urgent, we support measures that drive climate action, including this proposal, which strengthens Hawai'i's electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure and helps accelerate a just transition away from fossil fuels.

Electric vehicle adoption is growing, but Hawai'i still lags its potential. Hawai'i is a national leader in EV adoption, but still far from where we need to be. As of December 2025, more than 40,000 electric passenger vehicles were registered in the state, according to the Hawai'i Electric Vehicle Association, representing about 3.8% of all passenger vehicles, with year-over-year growth exceeding 15%.

Yet over 93% of passenger vehicles in Hawai'i still run on gasoline or diesel, and ground transportation remains a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and imported fuel dependence. To meet Hawai'i's climate goals and reduce the state's reliance on imported fossil fuels, EV adoption must accelerate dramatically.

Moreover, charging infrastructure remains a primary barrier to EV adoption for both the public and private sector. The Legislature has already recognized that Hawai'i is among the leading states in EV adoption, but among the last in the availability of public charging infrastructure, creating a widening infrastructure gap.

This problem has become more acute over the past year, as federal officials have targeted numerous programs that stimulate the adoption of clean energy

and electric vehicles, heightening the need to enact state policies to safeguard these programs at the local level. According to a white paper published by Harvard University's Salata Institute for Climate and Sustainability in March of 2025, federal efforts to cut electric vehicle tax credits will likely reduce zero-emissions vehicle adoption rates by at least 6%, while increasing carbon emissions by 20.3 million metric tons over baseline projections for 2030.

Transitioning public sector transportation fleets to zero-emissions vehicles is critical in achieving Hawai'i's statutory commitment to achieving a 100% renewable portfolio standard. Under the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation created the Ride and Drive funding opportunity for states, which set aside \$51 million in grants for projects to improve the performance, reliability, and resiliency of electric vehicle charging, while strengthening the electric vehicle workforce.

The Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO), in collaboration with other state agencies, applied for funding through the Ride and Drive program. Such funding was intended to address the infrastructure needs of Hawaii's government fleets to meet state mandates that require public agencies procuring new light-duty passenger vehicles, light-duty trucks, or multi-purpose passenger vehicles to prioritize the purchase of zero-emission vehicles, with the goal of attaining 100% fleet conversion by 2035.

In October of 2025, however, the United States Department of Energy terminated more than \$7.5 billion in funding for state-level energy projects, including approximately a million dollars that had been awarded to HSEO for the development of resilient charging infrastructure through the Ride and Drive program. The department had approved the grant just four weeks before announcing its cancellation, undermining the financial stability of the state's efforts to expand access to resilient charging infrastructure.

Charging access is especially critical for renters, condominium residents, and low-income households, who often cannot install home chargers and therefore cannot benefit from the cost savings of EV ownership. A robust charging network is necessary to make EVs a viable option for everyone, not just homeowners. Research and policy experience consistently show that charging availability is one of the strongest predictors of EV adoption, as it reduces range anxiety and increases consumer confidence.

Fossil fuel dependence is not just an environmental issue. It is an economic security issue for working families and our state economy. Hawai'i imports most of its petroleum, sending billions of dollars out of the state and exposing residents to volatile global energy prices. Transportation electrification keeps money in the local economy and lowers household transportation costs.

Climate change disproportionately harms Native Hawaiian, low-income, and coastal communities through sea-level rise, extreme weather, and ecosystem degradation. The exploitation of people and the exploitation of the climate are interconnected: extractive industries profit, while frontline communities bear

the health and financial burdens, which exacerbate the social determinants of gender violence and exploitation. Investing in EV infrastructure is thus a public health, economic equity, and climate justice strategy, not merely a technology upgrade.

Finally, the Legislature should view SB 2905 in the broader context of Hawai‘i’s barrel tax on imported petroleum, which was designed to internalize the public costs of fossil fuel dependence and fund the transition to clean energy. The barrel tax recognizes that oil extraction and combustion impose significant costs on communities through climate change, air pollution, public health impacts, and economic volatility, while profits flow to multinational corporations.

Directing barrel tax revenues toward EV charging infrastructure is a concrete way to shift resources from extractive industries to community benefit, accelerate decarbonization, and ensure that the transition away from fossil fuels is financed by those who have historically contributed most to climate and human exploitation.

This bill recognizes that previous funding for EV charging incentives must dramatically increase to meet growing infrastructure needs. It supports affordability, livability, and economic resilience by reducing fossil fuel imports and expanding access to clean transportation. Expanding EV charging infrastructure is one of the most effective actions we can take to reduce emissions, lower the cost of living, and break the cycle of climate and economic exploitation.

With aloha,

Kris Coffield

President, Imua Alliance

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

735 Bishop Street, Suite 417

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS; FUEL, Hike Barrel Tax to Feed EV Charging System Fund

BILL NUMBER: SB 2905, HB 1620

INTRODUCED BY: WAKAI, CHANG, McKelvey, Richards; HB INTRODUCED BY:
LOWEN, PERRUSO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Increases the environmental response, energy, and food security tax and the amount collected from the tax that is deposited into the electric vehicle charging system subaccount.

SYNOPSIS: Amends section 243-3.5, HRS, to change the barrel tax from \$1.05 to \$1.15 per barrel, and to raise the earmark to the electric vehicle charging system subaccount from 3 cents to 13 cents.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon approval.

STAFF COMMENTS: The barrel tax, HRS section 243-3.5, now imposes a tax of \$1.05 on each barrel of petroleum product sold to an end user. It also imposes a tax on 19 cents per million BTU on a fossil fuel other than a petroleum product that is sold to an end user.

If it is proposed to raise the barrel tax on petroleum products, we question why there is no comparable increase to the barrel tax on non-petroleum fossil fuels.

In addition, the proposed measure would perpetuate the earmarking of tax revenues. Incentives for electric vehicle charging systems may be a worthy expense if considered alone. But does that justify bypassing the normal appropriation and budgeting process that also considers invasive species, risks to the social safety net, and the aging infrastructure in our educational system?

Earmarking revenues from any tax type for a particular purpose decreases transparency and accountability.

Next, it should be remembered that revenues diverted for a special purpose, in this case to fund electric bicycle charging systems, will not be counted against the state's spending ceiling or debt limit and will obscure the state's true financial condition.

Digested: 1/26/2026



Testimony in Support of SB2905
Hearing on February 9 2026 at 3:00pm
Senate AEN/EIG Committees

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Doorae Shin, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Our Children's Trust in strong support of SB2905, which increases electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

SB2905 addresses one of the most significant barriers to electric vehicle adoption in Hawai'i: the lack of accessible, affordable, and reliable charging infrastructure. While electric vehicle ownership in Hawai'i continues to grow, the state's charging network has not kept pace. As a result, Hawai'i now ranks among the lowest states in the nation for charging availability and continues to fall further behind. This gap disproportionately impacts renters, residents of multi-unit dwellings, rural communities, and lower-income households, many of whom lack access to home charging and are therefore excluded from the benefits of electric transportation.

Transportation is one of the largest household expenses in Hawai'i. Electric vehicles offer substantial savings on fuel and maintenance, but those savings are only attainable if residents can reliably charge where they live, work, and travel. By expanding funding for charging infrastructure, SB2905 directly supports household affordability while advancing Hawai'i's clean energy and climate goals.

SB2905 builds on an existing and proven program. The electric vehicle charging system rebate program was established in 2019 and, despite its modest scale, has already supported the installation of hundreds of charging systems statewide. Demand for this program has consistently exceeded available funding. This bill responds to that demand by increasing the portion of the barrel tax dedicated to charging infrastructure from three cents to thirteen cents per barrel, while increasing the overall barrel tax by ten cents. Importantly, this approach uses an existing tax on imported petroleum to fund solutions that reduce dependence on that very fuel.

The expanded funding enabled by SB2905 will support rebates for the installation of electric vehicle charging systems in multi-unit dwellings, workplaces, and publicly accessible locations. It prioritizes broader geographic coverage and more equitable access across the islands, ensuring that the transition to clean transportation is not limited to single-family homeowners. By focusing on shared and community-based charging, the bill helps ensure that renters and condo residents are not left behind.

SB2905 also strengthens Hawai'i's energy security. The state remains heavily dependent on imported petroleum, leaving our communities vulnerable to volatile global fuel prices and supply disruptions. Investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure helps keep energy dollars in Hawai'i, supports the use of locally generated renewable energy, and reduces exposure to external economic shocks.

In addition to its economic and equity benefits, SB2905 is directly aligned with Hawai‘i’s legal and policy obligations to reduce transportation emissions. In 2022, thirteen youth plaintiffs filed *Navahine v. Hawai‘i Department of Transportation (HDOT)*, resulting in a settlement that requires HDOT to “take any actions necessary” to achieve zero emissions from ground, marine, and inter-island aviation by no later than 2045. The settlement was agreed to as a means to protect children’s constitutional rights to a life-sustaining climate system and to preserve Hawai‘i’s public trust resources for present and future generations. In 2025, HDOT released its Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan, which identifies the critical near-, mid-, and long-term policies needed to comply with the settlement agreement, including expanding electric vehicle charging infrastructure to support widespread adoption of zero-emission vehicles. SB2905 is a concrete and necessary step toward fulfilling these obligations.

Reducing emissions from the transportation sector also delivers immediate public health benefits. Increased electric vehicle adoption lowers air pollution, particularly in communities located near high-traffic corridors, ports, and industrial areas. These reductions improve respiratory and cardiovascular health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs, benefits that are especially important for children and other vulnerable populations.

SB2905 represents a pragmatic, equitable, and forward-looking investment in Hawai‘i’s future. It strengthens a successful program, addresses a clear infrastructure gap, reduces household transportation costs, and advances the state’s climate, energy security, and public health goals. By expanding access to electric vehicle charging, this bill ensures that the benefits of clean transportation are shared broadly and fairly across Hawai‘i.

For these reasons, Our Children’s Trust strongly urges your support for SB2905.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony and for your leadership on this critical issue.

With aloha,



Doorae Shin
Our Children’s Trust



HAWAI'I YOUTH TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL

HYTC Testimony for the Senate Committee on
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
ENERGY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
SB 2905 | Monday, February 9, 2026

IN STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Committee Members,

Mahalo for the chance to testify at today's hearing. SB 2905 is a bill that the Hawai'i Youth Transportation Council strongly supports. **Clean energy and reducing carbon emissions are primary goals of the Energy Security and Waste Reduction plan** mandated by the Navahine V. HDOT settlement, the settlement that created our council.

Our inaugural year has been focused on how we can best support, defend, and help achieve these goals, and SB 2905 is right in our crosshairs. This bill expands a tax to allow more electric charging infrastructure to be built across Hawai'i, **giving both rural and urban communities access to more chargers.**

We cannot expect our Ohana to adopt electric vehicles if we do not provide the infrastructure to support them. Many families and individuals across Hawai'i, **including many of our own members**, face one EV-related roadblock: **access to chargers.** Families that either don't have the means to install a fast charger at home or use their electric vehicle as their primary commuting vehicle **may rely on our public charging network.** A network, may I add, is **at capacity in many places, or did not have capacity to begin with.**

Additionally, having a **reliable and robust EV charging network can make commuting for working families, students, and our Kapuna more dependable,** for whom public transit is not viable. It also makes older EVs more useful, permitting people more time before having to buy a new car.

In conclusion, on behalf of the entire Hawai'i Youth Transportation Council, I ask that you support SB 2905. Please recognise not just the **environmental impact of electric vehicles,** but also **the affordability they can bring to Hawai'i families** if paired with an **extensive electric vehicle network.**

Mahalo,

Mia
Nishiguchi

Mia Nishiguchi
Council Chair
O'ahu Honolulu Representative

Luke
Gee

Luke Gee
Council Vice-Chair
West Side Hawai'i Representative

Moss
Kuon

Moss Kuon
Press Secretary
Central Maui Representative

Derek
Takeno

Derek Takeno
Outreach Chair
Central Maui Representative

Luca
Zev Cuniberti

Luca Zev Cuniberti
Policy and Legislation Chair
O'ahu North Shore Representative

Connor
Ulene

Connor Ulene
Policy and Legislation Vice Chair
Central Maui Representative





SENATOR MIKE GABBARD, CHAIR
SENATOR HERBERT M. "TIM" RICHARDS, III, VICE CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ENVIRONMENT

SENATOR GLENN WAKAI, CHAIR
SENATOR STANLEY CHANG, VICE CHAIR
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2905

Monday, February 9, 2026, 3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 224, State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street

Dear Chairs Gabbard and Wakai, Vice-Chairs Richards and Chang, and Committee Members:

Earthjustice **strongly supports Senate Bill 2905**, Relating to Energy. This bill provides a modest increase of 10 cents to the barrel tax and a corresponding increase of the allocation of barrel tax revenues to the existing electric vehicle charging system rebate program. This funding bump is a small but essential step to help expand the EV charging infrastructure that Hawai'i needs to enable consumer savings and pollution reductions for everyone. The EV charging system rebate program is an established program with a successful track record over numerous years, and this bill would build on this program's success and broaden its reach.

As SB 2905 recognizes, Hawai'i is currently among the leading states in the nation in the rate of EV adoption, but among the *last* in the availability of charging infrastructure. According to testimony by the State Energy Office, in contrast to California's recommended ratio of one public charger per seven EVs in operation, Hawai'i had only one public charger per 47 EVs in 2025—which was actually a step backward from the previous year's ratio of one public charger per 38 EVs. In other words, Hawai'i is falling further behind, and the gap between available and necessary infrastructure is widening.

As the legislature has also recognized, EVs are already cheaper than fossil fuel vehicles in total lifetime costs. A recent study by Ulupono Initiative indicated that households with the highest reliance on gasoline spend almost \$14,000 on average per year, or 14 percent of their incomes. Switching to EVs could save these households \$5,300 dollars annually on fuel costs alone, or up to 38 percent savings on their gas bills.

The dearth of charging infrastructure, however, is a major barrier to EV adoption, particularly for renters, apartment and condo residents, and lower-income households and communities. Increasing public funding for EV charging infrastructure is a fundamental priority for affordability and equity, ensuring that everyone has access to essential facilities and no one is left behind in the transition to a clean transportation system.

Given the budget challenges the State is currently facing, this modest increase in the overall barrel tax to increase funding for this essential program would be revenue-neutral in its impact on the state budget. In the alternative, the legislature could simply increase the allocation of barrel tax revenues to the EV charging system rebate program. Currently, a total of *only 20 cents* of the \$1.05 collected on each barrel—or only 19% of the total tax—is allocated to the purposes for which it was established. Increasing the allocation of barrel tax proceeds to the EV charger program by 10 cents would have a negligible effect on the budget and still leave the vast majority (72%) of the proceeds unallocated from the general fund.

Particularly given the problems with the federal government rescinding critical funding support, the State must do what it can to show leadership and provide the beneficial investments today that will enable savings going forward. Now is the time to make bold investments for affordability and safety for Hawai'i's people and not ignore or abandon that responsibility.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or need further information.

Isaac H. Moriwake, Esq.
Managing Attorney
Earthjustice, Mid-Pacific Office

SB-2905

Submitted on: 2/7/2026 6:01:03 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Bohlen	Testifying for Climate Protectors Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!



Carbon Cashback

February 8, 2026

Re: AEN/EIG hearing of SB2905 on February 9, 2026, at 3:00 pm

Position: Support

Aloha e Chairs Gabbard and Wakai, Vice Chairs Richards and Chang, and members of the Senate Committees on Agriculture and Environment and Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs:

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i advocates for legislation that reduces carbon emissions and strengthens Hawai'i's energy independence while protecting vulnerable kama'āiana families.

Carbon Cashback Hawai'i is in strong support of SB2905, which increases the barrel tax and directs the additional revenues to the electric vehicle charging system rebate program, a successful but funding-constrained program.

Ground transportation is one of Hawai'i's largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions and a major contributor to high household energy costs. This bill directly addresses both challenges by helping residents transition to clean and cost-efficient electric vehicles.

Limited electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the State is an important barrier to widespread adoption of electric vehicles, particularly for renters, condo residents, rural communities, and lower-income households. This bill would help break down that barrier, benefitting families and helping the State achieve its clean energy and energy security goals.

We urge you to pass this bill out of your committees.

Feb. 9, 2026, 3 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol
Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

To: Senate Committee on Agriculture and Environment

Sen. Mike Gabbard, Chair

Sen. Herbert M. "Tim" Richards, III, Vice Chair

Senate Committee on Energy and Intergovernmental Affairs

Sen. Glenn Wakai, Chair

Sen. Stanley Chang, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB2905 — RELATING TO ENERGY

Aloha chairs, vice chairs and other members of the committees,

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii **opposes** [SB2905](#), which would increase the environmental response, energy and food security tax from \$1.05 to \$1.15 per barrel of petroleum.

Hawaii's residents and businesses cannot afford new taxes, tax increases, fees or surcharges. Any increase in the tax rates for petroleum products will only contribute to the high cost of living, especially the state's high energy and gas prices.

Hawaii residents already pay the highest electricity prices in the country,¹ and the islands that depend heavily on petroleum to provide grid-scale electricity — especially Lanai, Molokai and Oahu — would be hit hardest by the increase proposed in this legislation.²

¹ "[Hawaii](#)," U.S. Energy Information Administration, May 15, 2025.

² Leon R. Roose, Marc Matsuura and Damon Schmidt, "[Fundamentals of Energy Transition in the Pacific Island Countries and Territories](#)," GridSTART, Oct. 24, 2025, pp. 8-9.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Testimony in Support of HB2030 - Clean Vehicle Rebate Program Hearing with the House Committee on Transportation

Tuesday February 10, 2026

Hello Chair Kila, Vice Chair Miyake, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Chapin Fish, and I live in Portland, Oregon. I am writing in strong support of HB2030, which establishes Hawai'i's Clean Vehicle Rebate Program.

I support the Clean Vehicle Rebate Program for three reasons: to stand in solidarity with the 13 plaintiffs in *Navahine v. Hawai'i Department of Transportation*, to advocate for my rights to life, liberty, and a life-sustaining climate system, and to fight for the future of youth in Hawaii around the country and world, a future under siege from the perils of climate change.

While interning for the non-profit, public interest law firm Our Children's Trust, I have had the great honor of advocating and learning from the *Navahine* plaintiffs. All the plaintiffs have important stories which have moved me greatly. I want to highlight the story of a plaintiff from Oahu that especially resonates with me and demonstrates the critical nature of this bill. She relies on the Kamehameha Highway, an integral access road to their community. Climate-fueled disasters have caused the highway to flood repeatedly, making it harder for youth, like her, to go to school and fulfill other responsibilities while their communities already struggle from land damage. Moreover, ocean acidification, warming, and contamination of oceans and freshwater are driving coral reef loss and declining fish populations, disrupting their community's fishing practices and bringing both cultural and economic harms. Climate change is not an abstraction for her, other *Navahine* plaintiffs, and youth in Hawai'i, it is a daily reality.

The settlement agreement reached by these brave youths in 2024 represents a chance for the government of Hawai'i to bring justice to its people, and to its youth. This bill, in line with the settlement agreement, will help protect cultural practices and safeguard livelihoods for Hawai'i's communities amid accelerating climate impacts.

But I am also here because this bill, by helping decrease carbon emissions in your state, will benefit youth around the world, for climate change is a threat that knows no borders. As a young person from the Northwest, a vulnerable region, I, too, have experienced similar harms from climate change and fears about my future, just like Hawai'ian youth. My involvement in the climate movement goes back to the summer of 2020, where wildfires led to 15 days of hazardous air quality in my hometown of Portland, Oregon and decimated my state's cherished national beauty. Last summer, I interned at the U.S. Senate to make a direct impact from within my government. I'm here today with Our Children's Trust to continue to fight for my generation, because I felt that I could no longer trust my government to put my interests at the forefront of its decision-making when my generation's lives are at stake.

Transportation is the largest source of pollution in Hawai'i, accounting for more than half of our statewide emissions. And our state spends billions each year importing gasoline and diesel, hurting our local economy and contributing to climate change and public health harms.

In 2025, HDOT released its Energy Security and Waste Reduction Plan, which identifies the critical near-, mid-, and long-term policies needed to comply with the settlement agreement. This bill is one of those critical solutions. HDOT's plan indicates that 81% of new vehicle sales must be electric by 2030 to stay on track, far behind the current ~14%.

This bill creates a revenue-neutral rebate program to lower the upfront cost of new and used electric vehicles for Hawai'i residents, letting more of our community access the savings of driving electric. This bill centers equity, with rebates applying only to non-luxury EVs (including used EVs), with no fees placed on the most affordable gas/diesel vehicles. This ensures that working families, not just the wealthy, can enjoy the financial and health benefits of EVs.

Please make clean transportation a realistic option for families across the islands, and support HB2030.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2905

Submitted on: 2/8/2026 1:53:11 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leo Cohen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Leo Cohen. I live in Washington, D.C., and I am writing in strong support of SB2905, which expands the electric vehicle charging system rebate program and ensures its sustainable funding.

My commitment to the climate we all share is lifelong. I grew up helping maintain my grandparents' off-grid home in rural California, brushing snow off solar panels and marveling at the power of their windmill. It was here that I learned to value simple things like warm showers that I took for granted back in the SF Bay Area, where I lived.

As I grew older, I realized those memories of renewables were about far more than just off-grid infrastructure; they were about the climate. A truth made visceral as the reality of the climate crisis eclipsed them: witnessing ash fall in my neighborhood from massive wildfires, enduring unbearable heat waves, and my community facing the mounting threats of sea level rise and drought.

From environmental regulation to conservation advocacy, my career has been a direct response to that wake-up call. I now focus on securing legally binding climate rights for future generations, and I see SB2905 as a vital pillar in that effort.

Transportation is the largest source of pollution in Hawai‘i, accounting for more than half of statewide emissions. Hawai‘i spends billions each year importing gasoline and diesel, hurting the local economy and contributing to climate change and other harms to public health.

In 2022, thirteen youth plaintiffs filed *Navahine v. Hawai‘i Department of Transportation (HDOT)*, resulting in a settlement that requires the HDOT to “take any actions necessary” to achieve zero emissions from ground, marine, and inter-island aviation by no later than 2045. The settlement was agreed to as a means to protect children’s constitutional rights to a life-sustaining climate system and to preserve Hawai‘i’s public trust resources for present and future generations.

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bill is one of those critical solutions. HDOT's plan indicates that 81% of new vehicle sales must be electric by 2030 to stay on track, far behind the current ~14%.

This bill creates a revenue-neutral rebate program to lower the upfront cost of new and used electric vehicles for Hawai'i residents, letting more of our community access the savings of driving electric. This bill centers equity, with rebates applying only to non-luxury EVs (including used EVs), with no fees placed on the most affordable gas/diesel vehicles. This ensures that working families, not just the wealthy, can enjoy the financial and health benefits of EVs.

Please make clean transportation a realistic option for families across the islands, and support SB2905.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Leo Cohen

SB-2905

Submitted on: 2/6/2026 8:17:21 PM

Testimony for AEN on 2/9/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Ball	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this legislation.

David Ball

Waiialae-Kahala