



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

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
3:00 PM
State Capitol, 229

SB3044
RELATING TO STATEWIDE TRAFFIC CODE

Senate Committee on Transportation

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) opposes S.B. No. 3044.

This bill amends Section 291C-33 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to remove references to countdown timers as it relates to pedestrian-control signals, including the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins. The existing language in Section 291C-33 of the HRS regarding pedestrian countdown timers provides clarity by establishing that a pedestrian shall finish crossing a roadway but shall not begin crossing a roadway during the countdown. Eliminating references to countdown timers may result in pedestrians being unsure of their responsibilities in a crosswalk that operates a pedestrian-control signal with countdown timer.

HDOT understands that under the changes S.B. No. 3044 proposes, pedestrians would still be prohibited from crossing a roadway during the countdown, which coincides with flashing the "Don't Walk" or "Upraised Palm" signal. However, HDOT would oppose the intent of this bill if it is to permit pedestrians to begin crossing during this phase for the following reasons:

- Allowing pedestrians to start to cross a roadway during the countdown would introduce the potential for pedestrians to make individual decisions that create unpredictable situations. This unpredictability could disrupt safety and efficiency, leaving other road users to navigate scenarios they may not anticipate but remain responsible for.
- Pedestrians crossing the street against nationally established traffic control devices and contrary to other road user expectations would be challenging especially for children and elderly persons, our most vulnerable road users. A pedestrian may mistakenly believe it is safe to cross the roadway, or dart in front of a turning vehicle as they rush to cross the street before conflicting vehicular traffic proceeds. Such decisions force drivers into sudden, unanticipated situations that could have devastating consequences.

There were 148 pedestrian fatalities and 495 serious injuries from 2021 through 2025, using preliminary data for 2025. Pedestrians aged 17 and younger or aged 65 and older were involved in 42 percent of pedestrian fatalities and 34 percent of pedestrian serious injuries. Overall, pedestrians accounted for 28 percent all traffic fatalities and 20 percent of all serious injuries during this period. Ensuring predictability for all roadway users is essential for safe interactions between pedestrians and vehicles, and advancing the State's goal of eliminating traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Testimony of the Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

Committee on Transportation

February 17, 2026 at 3:00PM

Conference Room 229

SB 3044

Relating to Transportation

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Committee Members,

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) **supports SB 3044**, which removes references to countdown timers as it relates to pedestrian-control signals, including the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins.

This bill is consistent with several goals of the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan including support for active and public transportation, promoting an equitable transportation system, and improving air quality and protecting environmental and cultural assets.¹ Removing the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins, makes walking a less hostile form of transportation, and can encourage more people to walk or roll to their destination.

Although the law that makes it illegal for pedestrians to step into the street once the clock starts counting down was passed to address pedestrian safety, pedestrian deaths have increased since the law's passing. Hawai'i road deaths hit an 18-year peak, with a spike in pedestrian and motorcycle deaths contributing to the more than 20% increase in deaths compared to 2024.²

The Federal Highway Administration lists proven safety countermeasures that have shown to decrease pedestrian crashes, hospitalizations, and deaths.³ Some examples include pedestrian medians or refuges, road diets, leading pedestrian intervals, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons. In addition to passing this law, proven safety countermeasures can be implemented systemically to truly improve pedestrian safety.

¹ https://oahumpo.org/?wpfb_dl=2215

² <https://www.civilbeat.org/2026/01/2025-hawaii-road-deaths-hit-18-year-peak/#:~:text=The%20state's%202025%20road%20fatalities%20included%3A&text=38%20pedestrians,5%20other%20non%20occupant%20fatalities>

³ [Proven Safety Countermeasures | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.gov/safety/crashes/prevention/countermeasures)

The OahuMPO is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) on the island of Oahu responsible for carrying out a multimodal transportation planning process, including the development of a long-range (25-year horizon) metropolitan transportation plan, referred to as the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), which encourages and promotes a safe and efficient transportation system to serve the mobility needs of people and freight (including walkways, bicycles, and transit), fosters economic growth and development, and takes into consideration resiliency needs, while minimizing fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 CFR 450.300](#)).

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



Testimony in Support for SB3044 - Relating to the Statewide Traffic Code
Committee on Transportation (TRS)
Tuesday, February 17th, 2026 at 3:00PM

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the TRS committee, Mahalo for the opportunity to **testify in STRONG SUPPORT of SB3044**, which would amend Section 291C-33, Hawaii Revised Statutes, would remove reference to countdown timers, including the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins.

SB3044 represents a practical and important step toward reducing unnecessarily burdensome pedestrian regulations that do not improve safety and instead contribute to confusing rules and avoidable citations. As Hawai'i Appleseed's research demonstrates, Hawai'i relies heavily on pedestrian enforcement—issuing more than 30,000 jaywalking-related citations between 2018 and 2023—without evidence that this approach reduces pedestrian injuries or fatalities.¹

Roughly 46 percent of these citations were given for violating HRS§291C-33,² which prohibits pedestrians from crossing on the Don't Walk Sign or against the Countdown Timer. Under these laws, **pedestrians can receive a \$130 jaywalking ticket for crossing the street after the countdown timer has started**, even if they have ample time to cross. Rather than promoting safety, these overly technical pedestrian regulations criminalize ordinary, reasonable behavior.

Pedestrian countdown signals were not designed to prohibit people from entering a crosswalk once the countdown begins. According to national best practices, including guidance used by cities like San Francisco, countdown timers exist to provide pedestrians with additional information—specifically, how much time remains to safely cross the street.³ These signals help people make informed decisions based on their walking speed, mobility needs, and comfort level. Treating the countdown as a strict “do not enter” signal misinterprets its purpose and turns a safety tool into an enforcement trap.

This misinterpretation disproportionately impacts seniors, people with disabilities, parents with children, and others who may need more time to cross. It also increases the likelihood that pedestrians will rush into crossings or avoid signalized intersections altogether—outcomes that undermine, rather than enhance, safety.

¹ Seitz, A, “Freedom to Walk: Decriminalizing Jaywalking and Shifting Investment Towards Safe, Accessible Pedestrian Infrastructure,” Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice, March, 2024.
<https://hiappleseed.org/publications/freedom-to-walk>.

² Ibid.

³ City and County of San Francisco, “Pedestrian Signals,” sbetterstreets, 2025.
<https://sbetterstreets.org/find-project-types/pedestrian-safety-and-traffic-calming/pedestrian-signals/index.html>.

In summary, Hawai'i Appleseed urges the Legislature to support SB3044 as a commonsense reform that improves clarity, fairness, and safety for people walking in Hawai'i. Reducing unnecessary pedestrian regulations is a critical step toward streets that work for everyone.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important measure.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Abbey Seitz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Abbey Seitz
Director of Transportation Equity
Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice

SB-3044

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:01:14 PM

Testimony for TRS on 2/17/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael A. Cobb Jr	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this change to the crossing law. This law needs to be regularly enforced. I see too many pedestrians on our streets who don't care about their own safety. The sad part is that the laws of motion have no mercy. I spend over 50 hours on the road each week, I see a lot of issues, this change will make thing worse for everyone.

SB-3044

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 10:28:24 PM

Testimony for TRS on 2/17/2026 3:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry, Support

3044 SB RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE TRAFFIC CODE

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

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: February 16, 2026

RE: Senate Bill 3044
Measure Title: RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE TRAFFIC CODE.
Report Title: Pedestrian-control Signals; Traffic Code; Countdown Timer

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support Senate Bill 3044. Thank you for introducing this bill.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

Dear Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and members of the Committee,

My name is Kiana Otsuka, and I am a Transportation Planner whose expertise is in walk, roll, bike, and transit. I am writing testimony in **strong support of SB3044**, which removes references to countdown timers as it relates to pedestrian-control signals, including the requirement that pedestrians must begin crossing a roadway before a countdown timer begins.

I am excited to see the legislature consider this bill because current statutes relating to pedestrians are needlessly restrictive and disproportionately impact people who do not drive and those who primarily rely upon walking as a means of transportation. These people are often low-income and walk out of necessity, as owning and operating a vehicle is prohibitively expensive.

I wanted to share with the committee an experience I had while living in Los Angeles to go to college. I was trying to cross the street at a traffic signal to go to an internship interview, however, the cars turning right, who were supposed to make a complete stop on red before turning, did not stop. The fourth vehicle finally stopped for me to cross, but that means I entered the crosswalk when the countdown timer had already begun. I had to cross 8 lanes of traffic, and when I finally got to the last lane (the countdown timer indicated I still had time to cross), I was almost hit by a police vehicle who also ignored the right turn on red, after a complete stop. The police officer then wrote me a ticket for \$150, money that I did not have at the time because I was still looking for a paid internship. This severely impacted my finances at the time, and also made me afraid to walk (I did not have a car in Los Angeles and relied on walking, biking, and using the bus). This bill would remove the same law in Hawai'i that financially and emotionally impacted me in Los Angeles and continues to negatively impact our local residents.

Pedestrian enforcement and our current transportation system are not effective at improving pedestrian safety. Hawai'i road deaths hit an 18-year peak, with a spike in pedestrian and motorcycle deaths contributing to the more than 20% increase in deaths compared to 2024¹. If we truly care about improving pedestrian safety, we need to change the way we allocate our budgets to fund projects that improve pedestrian safety and design our transportation facilities to reduce vehicle speed. The Federal Highway Administration has a great resource that includes proven safety countermeasures that Hawai'i could implement to see a substantial decrease in pedestrian crashes, hospitalizations, and deaths.² Some examples include implementing pedestrian medians or refuges, road diets, leading pedestrian intervals, and rectangular rapid flashing beacons.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important measure that will help to improve mobility justice and reduce the unnecessary pretextual stops, potential for escalation, and

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<https://www.civilbeat.org/2026/01/2025-hawaii-road-deaths-hit-18-year-peak/#:~:text=The%20state's%202025%20road%20fatalities%20included%3A&text=38%20pedestrians,5%20other%20non%2Doccupant%20fatalities>

² [Proven Safety Countermeasures | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#)

therefore incarceration and burden on the justice system. The State of Hawai'i must remove restrictive pedestrian laws from its criminal code and shift the responsibility of safety from people walking and rolling to systems, policies, planning and design. This will reduce traffic violence which has seen a dramatic recent increase, and prevent the disparate policing of people walking. There are proven safety countermeasures to improve pedestrian safety that the State and Counties may better spend our time, resources, and budget, including tax payer dollars, that will help to save lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Mahalo,
Kiana Otsuka