



# HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

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Testimony of  
**MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON  
TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS  
AND  
LABOR AND TECHNOLOGY**

Wednesday, February 14, 2024  
3:05 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

In Support of  
**SB 2894**

## **RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION.**

Chairs Lee and Aquino, Vice Chairs Inouye and Moriwaki, and members of the Committees, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports SB 2894 which requires the Department of Transportation to establish a State Employee Commuter Benefits Program that provides free or subsidized public transit to state employees.

Ground transportation remains a substantial contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Ground transportation sector tailpipe emissions constitute 38% of all transportation emissions in Hawai'i. In 2019 alone, ground transportation contributed 4.03 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (MMT CO<sub>2</sub>e), making up 18.3% of the aggregated state gross total of 22.01 MMT CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions.<sup>1</sup>

Considerable efforts have been dedicated to enhancing the fuel efficiency of combustion engines, which has reduced the amount of needed fuel and associated emissions per VMT. Although the number of miles an average vehicle travels has not increased the total number of vehicles in Hawai'i has been increasing; thus, the total VMT

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<sup>1</sup> State of Hawai'i, Department of Health. Greenhouse Gas Inventory [Hawai'i Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2005, 2018, and 2019 \(hawaii.gov\)](https://www.hawaii.gov/energy/2021/01/20/hawaii-greenhouse-gas-emissions-report-for-2005-2018-and-2019/)

has been increasing as well, partially offsetting the GHG emission saved through improved fuel efficiency. *Hawai'i Pathways to Decarbonization* report emphasizes the importance of reducing energy consumption, including VMT, as the most cost-effective approach to achieving Hawai'i's statutory target "to sequester more greenhouse gases than emitted as soon as practicable but no later than 2045".<sup>2</sup>

SB 2894 not only offers tax-exempt transit passes but also introduces a subsidy to offset the monthly cost of commuting via transit, vanpool, or bicycle. This aligns seamlessly with the objective of supporting less energy-intensive modes of transportation and reducing VMT. The proposed program provides commendable options to encourage state employees to choose sustainable commuting methods.

In addition to reducing individual carbon footprints, promoting the use of public transit and alternative commuting methods collectively contributes to the overarching goal of a greener and more sustainable future. The HSEO recognizes the importance of such initiatives in advancing our state's commitment to carbon neutrality.

To further enhance the bill's impact, we recommend the inclusion of micromobility options, which would provide state employees with additional choices, fostering flexibility in energy efficient commuting choices. Incorporating micromobility into the State Employee Commuter Benefits Program not only promotes a diverse range of sustainable transportation choices but also addresses the unique needs of short-distance commuting. This addition aligns seamlessly with the bill's objective of supporting less energy-intensive modes of transportation and reducing overall vehicle miles traveled.

One item HSEO would like to note is that we have reached out to fellow agencies to discuss which department is best situated to administer a state employee commuter benefit program. HSEO also notes that associated costs of implementing this measure are not addressed in this version. HSEO supports the purpose and substance of SB 2894, but defers to the Department of Budget and Finance on the fiscal impacts of the bill, particularly in not replacing or adversely impacting priorities indicated in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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<sup>2</sup> Hawai'i State Energy Office (2023). [Hawai'i Pathways to Decarbonization, Act 238 Report to the 2024 Hawai'i State Legislature \(Act 238 Report\)](#)