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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Tuesday, February 4, 2025
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 325 and Videoconference

In Support of
HB461

RELATING TO COMMUTING.

Chair Lowen, Vice Chair Perruso, and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports HB 461 which directs the Department of Human Resources Development (DHRD), in consultation with the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission, HSEO, and the Department of Accounting and General Services, to develop and implement a commuting choice benefit program for all state employees.

This measure aligns with the State's energy and climate goals by incentivizing alternatives to single-occupancy vehicle commuting, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and improving mobility options for commuters. Emissions from transportation account for more than half of Hawai'i's energy-related emissions, with ground transportation alone contributing 36% of the state's total greenhouse gas emissions, as reported in the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2021.¹ Achieving Hawai'i's statutory target of net-negative emissions by 2045 will require substantial reductions in emissions from ground transportation. Reducing vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increasing the use of sustainable transportation options are critical strategies in this

¹ State of Hawaii, Department of Health. Greenhouse Gas Inventory: [Hawaii Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report for 2020 and 2021 \(hawaii.gov\)](https://www.hawaii.gov/health/energy-environment/ghg-emissions-reports/)

effort.² State employees represent a critical market segment where transportation demand management (TDM) strategies can help achieve these reductions. The current system of subsidized state employee parking disproportionately incentivizes single-occupancy vehicle commuting while failing to provide equitable benefits to those who use public transportation, bicycles, car-sharing, or other sustainable commuting options.

A survey of more than 3,500 state employee (as part of a State Government Transportation Demand Management Study done in collaboration between the HSEO and the O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization) demonstrated strong interest in alternative transportation and has identified a commuting choice benefit program as an important travel demand management strategy.³

By requiring the development and implementation of a commuting choice benefit program, this bill takes an important step toward modernizing state employee transportation benefits. Providing equivalent transportation benefits for alternative commuting modes will encourage more employees to choose energy-efficient and lower-emission travel options, reducing overall vehicle miles traveled, alleviating congestion, and improving air quality. We stand ready to provide technical assistance to support the program's development and implementation.

The HSEO supports HB 461 as long as its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

² Hawai'i State Energy Office (2023). [Hawai'i Pathways to Decarbonization, Act 238 Report to the 2024 Hawai'i State Legislature \(Act 238 Report\)](#), pages 104, 146, and 184

³ <https://engage.oahumpo.org/transportation-demand-management-tdm-study>