



HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

235 South Beretania Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Telephone:
Web:

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARK B. GLICK
CHIEF ENERGY OFFICER

(808) 451-6648
energy.hawaii.gov

Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & HOMELESSNESS

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

Providing Comments on
HOUSE BILL NO. 1879 HD1

RELATING TO PUBLIC TRANSIT.

Chair Marten, Vice Chair Olds, and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) offers the following comments on HB1879 HD1, which establishes a Subsidized Youth Transit Program within the Hawai'i Department of Transportation in coordination with county transit services, prioritizing access for youth who demonstrate financial or social need, to be paid by an increase in the environmental response, energy, and food security tax.

HSEO appreciates the Legislature's continued focus on improving access to affordable, equitable transportation options for Hawai'i's residents, particularly children and youth. Transportation is Hawai'i's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, and policies that expand access to efficient, shared transportation modes can play an important role in advancing the State's long-term energy and climate objectives.

Hawai'i has established ambitious statutory goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by fifty percent by 2030 and achieve net negative emissions by 2045. Increasing public transit use, especially for routine trips such as school, extracurricular activities and community services, is among a portfolio of strategies needed to achieve those goals, which also include reductions in vehicle miles traveled (VMT), improved system efficiency, and expanded access to low- and zero-emission mobility options.

HSEO's 2023 *Pathways to Decarbonization* Report emphasizes that reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicle travel, particularly for short and frequent trips, is an important complement to vehicle electrification. The report highlights land use, travel behavior, and access to shared transportation as key drivers of transportation energy demand. Programs that lower barriers to transit use for youth and families can shape long-term travel patterns while providing household cost savings and mobility benefits.

HSEO also notes that transportation mode choice depends on factors beyond fare levels, including service frequency, reliability, travel time, safety, and connectivity. Data collection and evaluation are needed to understand how subsidized youth transit access and prioritized eligibility affect ridership, system performance, and emissions and to inform future policy decisions. Accordingly, HSEO appreciates the bill's emphasis on data-driven evaluation.

HSEO further notes that the bill authorizes the Department of Transportation to expand eligibility to additional youth populations subject to sufficient funding, which may allow for future program growth as resources permit.

Finally, HSEO recognizes that youth access to transit supports broader state priorities related to equity, public health, and safety. For households facing transportation cost burdens or limited access to private vehicles, reliable transit can improve access to education, extracurricular activities, and essential services.

HSEO defers to the Department of Budget and Finance on the budgetary impact of redistribution of the environmental response, energy, and food security tax funds.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.