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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
Thursday, February 13, 2025 – 10:00am

**Hawai'i Bicycling League STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB 1260, HD 1, Relating to Transportation**

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Committee Members,

My name is Eduardo Hernandez, and I am the Advocacy Director for the Hawai'i Bicycling League (HBL). We are a non-profit organization founded in 1975 with the mission of enabling more people to ride bicycles for health, recreation, and transportation. We strive to create communities across our islands that have safe, accessible, and inclusive environments for people to bike, walk, and roll.

Throughout its 50-year history, HBL has consistently identified that **a primary barrier for people to choose cycling for transportation, recreation, or health is that they feel physically vulnerable sharing the roads with cars, buses, and trucks.**

Accordingly, **Hawai'i Bicycling League strongly supported HB 1260 when it was introduced and considered by the House Transportation Committee.** However, the amended draft which is before you today only applies to counties with populations below 250,000 people, to establish a Summer Streets Pilot Program that temporarily closes vehicular traffic and repurposes roads for pedestrian and bicyclist uses. As such, the vast majority of the state's population will not get to participate in this innovative pilot which has many proven benefits, especially for keiki and kūpuna.

HBL urges this committee **to make the Summer Streets program a statewide pilot** as originally planned and; also to **require that community stakeholders be assigned a role to work with the counties and HDOT** to identify the optimal routes, days, and times for this program to operate and; to **establish a date before 12/31/25 when a plan shall be established.** Finally, HBL recommends funding the pilot with the recommended \$1,000,000 appropriation, otherwise the bill becomes an unfunded mandate for the counties.

### **Public Safety Benefits**

The Summer Streets Pilot Program is aligned with municipal public safety plans like:

- The **Honolulu Pedestrian Plan** published in 2022 to create vibrant, safe, and accessible streets for people of all ages.
- The **Honolulu Vision Zero Action Plan**, a data-based initiative to reduce and eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries on our streets by 2035.
- The **Community Design & Active Living Program** of the Department of Health Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division.

This pilot program is also aligned with the **Oahu Destination Management Plan**, published in coordination with the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, which aims to manage visitor impact in part by creating more opportunities to ride bicycles.

Furthermore, a [2024 study published by the Hawai'i Appleseed Center for Law and Economic Justice](#) detailed the imbalance that exists in our transportation system and the need to create an equitable system that prioritizes not just vehicles, but the well-being of Hawai'i's entire population including pedestrians and people who ride bicycles.

### **Public Health Benefits:**

There are numerous public health reasons to support a Summer Streets Pilot. A 2023 study published in the *The Lancet*<sup>1</sup> medical journal found a growing body of evidence that these types of Open / Summer Streets initiatives are important public health interventions that address many health challenges including obesity and social isolation.

According to the US Department of Transportation, almost a quarter of American adults report that they do not engage in any physical activity outside of their jobs, and sedentary lifestyles are an important reason that two-thirds of U.S. adults are overweight or obese. By improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities/experiences, we can create opportunities for people to exercise recreationally and build exercise into their daily routine by bicycling or walking to work, shops, and services.

### **Economic Benefits:**

Open/Summer Streets are often complemented with activities to encourage physical activity, civic engagement, local economic development, community development, recovery and revitalisation of public spaces, and changing transport behaviour through walking and cycling advocacy. A 2022 report published by New York City<sup>2</sup> found that Open Streets had a **significant economic impact**, increasing sales for businesses in these corridors and reduced sales in nearby control corridors.

HBL strongly believes that creating a fun day to walk, ride, and roll as well as engage with local health services, food, and entertainment will help shift public perception that cycling is dangerous and get people to consider how they can begin to reduce their own vehicle miles traveled using bicycles.

### **S/Eduardo Hernandez**

Advocacy Director

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[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(23\)00109-2/fulltext?ref=modesofliving.com#:~:text=Several%20studies%20have%20suggested%20that.noise%2C%20and%20improves%20air%20quality](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(23)00109-2/fulltext?ref=modesofliving.com#:~:text=Several%20studies%20have%20suggested%20that.noise%2C%20and%20improves%20air%20quality)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/streets-for-recovery.pdf>