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STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

February 26, 2021
2:00 P.M.
State Capitol, Teleconference

H.B. 1194
RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE TRAFFIC CODE

House Committee on Judiciary & Hawaiian Affairs

The Department of Transportation (DOT) **opposes** H.B. 1194 to prohibit vehicles with more than four wheels or a high passenger car from travelling in the extreme left-hand lane of a roadway marked for two or more lanes of traffic moving in the same direction. Although H.B. 1194 has the potential to improve traffic flow and increase safety, the DOT has the following concerns on a blanket lane use restriction:

1. Section 291C-49(3) H.R.S. already provides the authority necessary to restrict lane use through official signing;
2. Although this kind of restriction has been utilized on various rural interstates in a few jurisdictions, implementing this restriction for all roadways having two or more lanes is not appropriate. Most roadways on Oahu were built prior to today's complete street or modern design and access management criteria. H.B. 1194 will decrease the safety our most vulnerable roadway users by placing more commercial vehicles in the same or adjacent space they use. Many of our multi-lane roadways do not have adequate and/or continuous bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities;
3. In addition, closely spaced ramps (less than 2 miles apart), intersections and driveways reduce the creation of gaps necessary for vehicles to merge, weave, enter and lane change comfortably. H.B. 1194 will create more challenging conditions for all roadway users by congesting the right lanes with larger, slower moving vehicles making lane transitions and right lane usage more difficult. The result may be a slower traffic flow rather than what is intended to help improve traffic flow and safety;

4. Studies has shown that truck lane restrictions applied at appropriate sites can produce the marginal benefits for non-trucks of increased speeds and reduced delays, however this could be at the expense of reduced speeds and increased delays for trucks which results in an overall economic loss. The change in average speeds is typically in the order of 1 or 2 miles per hour; and
5. In the design of pavement structures, truck wheel loads based on anticipated truck volumes are distributed equally among all lanes. H.B. 1194 will have a significant impact on decreasing the life cycle of existing pavements and result in a considerable increase in construction and maintenance costs;

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



February 26, 2021

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
ON HB 1194 RELATING TO THE STATEWIDE TRAFFIC CODE**

Aloha Chair Nakashima and committee members. I am Gareth Sakakida, Managing Director of the Hawaii Transportation Association (HTA) with over 375 transportation related members throughout the state of Hawaii.

Hawaii Transportation Association opposes this bill. Any vehicle that can maintain the legal speed limit should be allowed to do so in any lane.

On non-freeway roadways, there are no “fast lanes” versus “slow lanes.” Most of these roadways have multitudes of destinations on both sides of the street (e.g. Dillingham Boulevard, King Street, Kapiolani Boulevard, etc.).

Drivers are trained to get into a needed lane as early as possible to prevent being blocked out of the lane and preclude the need for desperate maneuvers or stopping and waiting because traffic in the needed lane will not permit the truck to change lanes. It is very difficult to eyeball 1,000 feet to remain in compliance.

After turning left to make a delivery, then returning to the road to continue on in the same direction originally headed, you must get into the left lane of that road. It is not a safe maneuver to charge across multiple lanes to remain out of the left lane.

On a freeway, when accessing left hand exits, we want drivers to get into the proper lane for exit as soon as it is safe to prevent the need for high speed lane changes. At 50 mph, a vehicle will travel 1,000 feet in about 13 seconds. That is not a safe buffer of time when trying to change over to the left lane amidst traffic.

Drivers need to know where that 1,000 foot point is to remain legal. In situations where the truck is blocked from entering a lane in the “permissible zone,” the driver cannot be cited for obstructing traffic.

The freeway has exits that are accessed via the left lane like Aiea and Pearlridge going Westbound, and heading toward Waianae when the zipper lane is deployed, and to Mililani going Eastbound. We need to access these exits very early because of the speeds involved.

When traversing the freeway from the West end of Oahu, the left lane is the safest as traffic conflicts come from one direction. When surrounded by lanes of traffic the conflict can come from either side increasing the incidences of conflict. The right lane has the most conflict with traffic slowing for off ramps and speeding up at on ramps. In that scenario a large vehicle has little choice but to remain in a lower gear which will really slow things up there.

Commercial vehicles serve people everywhere so must be able to travel everywhere. Commercial motor vehicles pay more taxes and fees than other vehicles and should not be offered less capacity on the roads and highways.

Mahalo.

HB-1194

Submitted on: 2/25/2021 11:59:17 AM

Testimony for JHA on 2/26/2021 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Nancy Jones	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Testimony IN SUPPORT OF HB1194 / Relating to the Traffic Code & Truckers

Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Matayoshi, and House Committee Members:

I am submitting this testimony SUPPORTING HB1194, which essentially prevents drivers from operating any large, cargo containing (including rocks/sand) vehicles from traveling in the left lanes or close to the left-hand curb/edge of any State or County roadway. My husband has driven over 2 million miles between the East and West Coasts and after taking several cross-country road trips with him, BOTH of us are equally appalled that Hawai`i has not yet adopted the practices of 14 other states requiring commercial drivers of large cargo/freight delivery vehicles to remain in the right lane of State or County roadways. In our view, the only exception to this should be when passing -- slower vehicles OR those entering roadways on the right. However, I agree, that the proposed Hawai`i law should EXEMPT drivers of public transit vehicles traveling in the zipper or diamond lanes. Below are my thoughts on proposed language exceptions and additions to Chapter 291C of the Hawai`i Revised Statutes relative to HB1194:

1. Center Lane Exception. Relative to slow-merging four wheel vehicles (eg. at the eastbound Kunia/Ft. Weaver on-ramp), truckers should, however, be permitted to enter the center lane to avoid/bypass merging traffic.
2. Left Lane Exception. The ONLY left lane exception for large, cargo delivery vehicles should be left-hand exit/on-ramps (eg. the left-hand Mililani on/off-ramp linking H-1 eastbound and H-2 northbound). In this instance, cargo/freight vehicles should be permitted to move left at least 1 mile before entering this Mililani-bound on/off-ramp.
3. Reflective Safety Tape Installation for Cargo/Freight Vehicles. All truckers/trailers should have permanently affixed reflective tape of no LESS than 2-inches in height for when they are parked or broken down on the roadside. Without this added safety enhancement, these large cargo/delivery vehicles are often difficult to see on the roadside – particularly at night.
4. Turn Signal Installation Requirements for Cargo/Freight Vehicles. All cargo transport vehicles over 20-feet long (including rocks/sands/wrecked cars) should have turn signal indicator lights at least 8-inches high midway under the bodies of

towable trailers between axels to indicate to other drivers that the truck intends to change lanes. Without such turn signal lights, if a 53-foot trailer is heading down the road, it's very difficult for other drivers to gauge the intention of the truck driver.

For all of the above reasons, I respectfully urge your Committee to please **support HB 1194 – with language changes and pass this out of your Committee.** Thank you very much for this opportunity to present testimony on this measure that will assure the safety of ALL of Hawai`i's drivers.

Nancy Jones, PO Box 1462, Wai`anae, HI 96792

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Testimony SUPPORTING HB1194 / Relating to the Traffic Code & Truckers (2 pages)

Aloha Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Matayoshi, and House Committee Members:

As a former 18-wheel trucker, I submit this testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of HB1194, which would essentially restrict drivers from operating any cargo containing (including rocks/sand) vehicles in the LEFT/fast lane or close to the left-hand curb/edge of any state or county roadway. As someone who has logged over 2 million driving miles between the East and West Coasts, I was and still AM appalled that Hawai`i has yet to adopt the long-established practices of 14 other states in requiring drivers of large cargo/freight delivery vehicles to remain in the right lane of State or County roadways. The only exception to this should be when passing slower vehicles OR those entering the roadway from the right. I agree, however, that the proposed Hawai`i law should EXEMPT drivers of public transit vehicles travelling in the zipper or diamond lanes. Here are my thoughts on language exceptions and additions to Chapter 291C of the Hawai`i Revised Statutes relative to HB1194:

- 1) Center Lane Exception. Truckers concerned about slow-merging four wheel vehicles (eg. at the eastbound Kunia/Ft. Weaver on-ramp), SHOULD however, be permitted to enter the center lane to avoid/bypass merging traffic.
- 2) Left Lane Exception. The ONLY left lane exception for large, cargo delivery vehicles should be left-hand exit/on-ramps (eg. the left-hand Mililani on/off-ramp linking H-1 eastbound and H-2 northbound) – in which case, cargo/freight vehicles should be allowed to move left at least 1 mile before entering this Mililani-bound on/off-ramp.
- 3) Turn Signal Installation Requirements for Cargo/Freight Vehicles. All cargo transport vehicles over 20-feet long (including rocks/sands/wrecked cars) should have turn signal indicator lights at least 8-inches high midway under the bodies of towable trailers between axels to indicate to other drivers that the truck intends to change lanes. Without such turn signal lights, if a 53-foot trailer is heading down the road, it's very difficult for other drivers to gauge the intention of the truck driver. (NOTE: Directional lighting in photo.)
- 4) Reflective Safety Tape Installation for Cargo/Freight Vehicles. All truckers/trailers should have permanently affixed reflective tape of no LESS than 2-inches in height for when they are parked or broken down on the roadside. Without this added safety enhancement, these large cargo/delivery vehicles are often difficult to see on the roadside – particularly at night.





- 5) Warning Devices Inside Dump-Truck Type Vehicles. Rock trucks should be liable for any damage caused by debris falling from their vehicle – as an added incentive to ensure that their loads are properly contained/covered. In addition – to prevent future severe damage to overpass signage and overpasses (i.e. Gulick Avenue), any dump truck type bodies should have a mandatorily-installed warning device inside the operator cab to remind drivers that the dump body is fully extended and/or NOT properly lowered.

For all of the above reasons, I respectfully request that you also **support HB 1194 – with language changes and pass this out of your Committee.** Mahalo for this opportunity to present testimony on this important legislation to ensure the safety of ALL of Hawai'i's drivers.

Zeb Jones, PO Box 1462, Wai`anae, HI 96792