

**RES23-271
Testimony**

MISC. COMM. 602

TRANSPORTATION (TRANS)

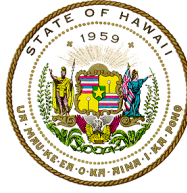
TRANSPORTATION (TRANS) Meeting
Meeting Date: Nov 14, 2023 @ 02:30 PM

Support: 1

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Chris Lee	Email: senlee@capitol.hawaii.gov	Zip: 96813
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Nov 14, 2023 @ 10:42 AM



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96813

November 14, 2023

Chair Dos Santos-Tam, Vice-Chair Cordero, and Members of the Committee on Transportation,

Aloha, and thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of this important measure today.

As we are too painfully aware, Hawaii is among the most dangerous states in the nation for safety on our streets and public thoroughfares. In fact, Hawaii has had among the very worst statistics in the nation in recent years when it comes to pedestrian safety, particularly for our seniors.

While some variables have been consistent, such as driver distraction, drinking while driving, and speeding, which have long been causes of fatalities, others are getting worse. Vehicles are getting larger and heavier, making it far more likely they will kill pedestrians upon impact compared to much smaller and lighter vehicles of the past. Building infrastructure that prioritizes cars over people throughout the decades has created increasingly hostile and dangerous streets. Homes and housing developments are now being built without meaningful yards or decent recreation areas, so kids have nowhere to play except the street, and so on.

Throughout the 20th century transportation infrastructure was designed by engineers to maximize speeds, often without regard to outcomes. Speed limits were then placed upon them afterward to designate appropriate speeds. As we know all too well today people don't often drive according to speed limits, they instead drive according to how fast they can go while feeling safe. This has meant relying on speed enforcement to slow traffic, which is not efficient or effective. Today we know streets must be designed based not on moving cars from A to B as fast as possible, but rather with safety as the primary consideration. This means designing streets assuming drivers are fallible and designing to account for that by physically separating cars from people on bikes, and pedestrians. It also means slowing speeds where appropriate and reducing speed limits until those infrastructure fixes can be made in the meantime.

This measure is important because it underscores a critical point - that counties must have the authority to reduce speeds and err on the side of safety in as quick and efficient a manner as possible. Waiting for traffic studies and other bureaucracy before taking commonsense action when we have already identified dangerous streets and intersections serves only to risk more lives being lost.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Senator Chris Lee
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and "L".

Chris Lee
State Senator