RES25-262
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 487

*INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORTATION & TECHNOLOGY (ITT)

***INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORTATION & TECHNOLOGY (ITT) Meeting**

Meeting Date: Sep 24, 2025 @ 09:00 AM

Support: 3

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Ross Isokane	isokane@gmail.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Self	Support	Sep 22, 2025 @ 09:37 AM

Testimony:

I'm a member of the Downtown-Chinatown Neighborhood Board (submitting as an individual) who advocates strongly for improving/maintaining public transportation. I strongly support this resolution.

As the resolution states, public transportation is an essential public service. I've lived and worked in other metropolitan cities around the U.S. and my favorite cities always had reliable, convenient, and affordable public transit programs that enticed those (who had a choice) to leave their cars in their garage. And my strong hunch is those cities have a much lower farebox recovery ratio than 25 to 30% (meaning the service is even more heavily subsidized by their cities).

Our O'ahu Metropolitan Planning Organization continuously promotes a goal of increased ridership. To meet this goal, public transportation must be heavily subsidized and the service must be convenient and reliable to enhance the commuter experience and incentivize more people to become regular riders.

Now I believe there should be a nominal fare (as opposed to some who'd go so far as to say TheBus should be free). But the idea that the fares charged to commuters/riders (most notably the lower income riders) should cover a more-than-incidental percentage of the operating costs is an outdated and misguided notion in my opinion (as a public transit advocate).

Our roads and highways are heavily subsidized, too. I'm curious what the gas tax/registration fee recovery ratio is.

To emphasize, for the benefit of O'ahu's future, public transportation is a critical piece. I believe our north star (i.e., our guiding principle above all other factors) should be the quality of the commuter experience. Let's have a "Rider-First Mentality"

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Micah Munekata	mmunekata@ulupono.com	96813
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
Ulupono Initiative	Support	Sep 22, 2025 @ 04:20 PM

Name:	Email:	Zip:
Benjamin Sadoski	bsadoski@5.unitehere.org	96826
Representing:	Position:	Submitted:
UNITE HERE Local 5	Support	Sep 23, 2025 @ 10:55 AM

Email: communications@ulupono.com

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE,
TRANSPORTATION, AND TECHNOLOGY
Wednesday, September 24, 2025 — 9:00 A.M.

Ulupono Initiative supports Resolution 25-262, Relating to the Policy on the Farebox Recovery Ratio.

Dear Chair Cordero and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Director of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports Resolution 25-262, which repeals the policy on the farebox recovery ratio for the City and County of Honolulu bus system.

Ulupono supports repealing the farebox recovery ratio policy for Honolulu's bus system. Our public transit system provides many important benefits, including reducing traffic congestion, lowering emissions, and offering affordable mobility for both residents and visitors. While the farebox recovery ratio has been useful in the past, maintaining a strict requirement can make it difficult to adjust services during times of economic change or when new transportation options like Skyline are added.

In addition, it is worth noting that a farebox recovery ratio at this level is uncommon among urban systems, where many cities see ratios well below 10 percent, if they use them at all. Moving away from this rigid benchmark will allow Honolulu to focus instead on strategies that encourage ridership growth and improve the overall quality of service, ensuring our transit system continues to meet the needs of the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

UNITE HERE!
Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer Gemma G. Weinstein, President Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President

September 23, 2025

Committee on Infrastructure, Transportation & Technology, Honolulu City Council
Councilmember Radiant Cordero, Chair
Councilmember Val Okimoto, Vice Chair

Testimony in Support of Resolution 25-262

Chair Cordero, Vice Chair Okimoto, and Committee Members,

UNITE HERE Local 5 represents 10,000 working people in the hotel, food service and health care industries across Hawaii. We are in support of Resolution 25-262. Public transportation is a public good that benefits all O‘ahu residents whether or not they take the bus / rail. For every person who takes public transportation rather than adding a car or truck to the road, it means incrementally less traffic, less pollution, less dependence on fossil fuels, and ultimately a greater long-term positive impact on the health and well-being of our communities. Decisions about fares, adding or removing routes, or changing the frequency of routes should be made based on need rather than cost to the greatest extent practicable.

We urge you to pass Resolution 25-262.

Mahalo.