

Bill 89, FD2 Testimony

MISC. COM. 984

From: CLK Council Info
Sent: Friday, December 11, 2020 9:00 AM
Subject: Council/Public Hearing Speaker Registration/Testimony

Written Testimony

Name	Cheryl Soon
Phone	8087548358
Email	csoon8@yahoo.com
Meeting Date	12-16-2020
Council/PH Committee	Council
Agenda Item	Bill 89 FD 2
Your position on the matter	Comment
Representing	Organization
Organization	Honolulu Rate Commission
Written Testimony	Will be submitted separately
Testimony Attachment	
Accept Terms and Agreement 1	

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Rate Commission

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

<http://www.honolulu.gov/boards-and-commissions>

650 South King Street, 3rd Floor • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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December 16, 2020

The Honorable Ann H. Kobayashi, Chair and Presiding Officer
Honolulu City Council
Honolulu Hale
530 South King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

SUBJECT: Honolulu Rate Commission Testimony on Bill 89, FD2

Dear Chair Kobayashi and Members of the City Council:

My name is Cheryl Soon. I am Chair of the Honolulu Rate Commission, which was created by the Honolulu City Charter for the sole purpose of reviewing transit fares and providing advice on such to the Administration and Council.

We appreciate the efforts that have been made by Budget Chair Manahan and this Council to amend Bill 89 into an FD 2 which incorporates many of the recommendations made by the Rate Commission. We encourage its passage.

The Rate Commission intends to closely track the progress by the administration in implementing the new fare structure of Bill 89. We stand ready to provide a public forum on what is working, what needs to improve. The universal goal is to increase transit ridership by everyone.

A primary matter we will be tracking is the new Extremely Low Income fare category. We are hopeful that additional revenue sources (local, state or federal) can be found which would allow its use beyond the 2,000 person limit shown in the bill.

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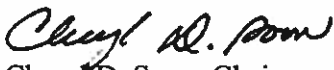
We will be encouraging the Department of Transportation Services (DTS) and Department of Community Services (DCS) to make ELI a successful way to help those in the community in the greatest need of financial assistance for their mobility needs. We will encourage reaching out to community partners to provide the eligibility determination in the fastest possible time. We agree to support DCS in rule-making. As the ELI program is established, we will be interested to see if two year certification (versus annual) is helpful.

Most importantly, passage of Bill 89 FD 2 places a responsibility upon DTS and the new administration to conduct an effective outreach and education program for the public about the new rates, as well as use of the Holo Card. This cannot be over-stated.

Regarding Bill 87, which passed second reading last week, the Rate Commission pledges to work with the new Administration and the new Council in the coming months to pass the provisions for a rate increase in the paratransit program and the use of the Holo Card on Handi-van.

Thank you for the opportunity to work together on this important matter. Glad tidings to all of you for the Holidays and a Happy New Year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheryl D. Soon".

Cheryl D. Soon, Chair
Honolulu Rate Commission



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
Wednesday, December 16, 2020 - 12:00 p.m. – City Council Chamber

UluPono Initiative supports Bill 89 (2020) Proposed FD2.

Dear Chair Kobayashi and Members of the Council:

My name is Amy Hennessey, and I am the Senior Vice President of Communications & External Affairs at UluPono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve 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; and better management of freshwater and waste.

UluPono Initiative supports Bill 89 (2020) Proposed FD2, amending Chapter 2, Revised Ordinances of Honolulu 1990, to introduce the City Payment Card as a means to pay fares, fees, and charges for the transportation services, and amending Chapter 13 to amend the fare structure for the city transit system.

Bill 89 improves fare policy, structure, and technology by creating a fair, simpler, and more equitable system. Fare capping, over the use of monthly passes, allows community members who depend on transit but may not consistently have the means to pay for the pass upfront to access the same frequent ridership discounts as others. The updated fare table is welcome in streamlining program administration and implementation; it also helps standardize discounts across different fare users. It also notes the possibility of developing newer programs or pilots that would facilitate discounted rates for bulk purchasers, such as universities or large employers. We are also excited to see the inclusion of the new low-income rate category. We commend the Rate Commission for its thoughtful report that helps the community to understand the legislation and its impacts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill.

Respectfully,

Amy Hennessey, APR
Senior Vice President, Communications & External Affairs

***Note:** UluPono Initiative values this measure before the Council today and appreciates the opportunity for continued civic engagement; however, we are unable to attend in person due to concerns around COVID-19 and to remain consistent with company policy and government directives encouraging social distancing. Thank you for your understanding.

Donald K. Sakamoto
E-mail: cfadarhonoluluhi@aol.com
Phone: (808) 291-1740

To: Councilmember Ann Kobayashi, Council Chair
Also: City Council Members
3rd floor Council Chambers Room
Honolulu Hale
530 S. King Street
Honolulu, HI 96813
Wednesday, December 16, 2020 12:00 PM

Aloha Chair Kobayashi and Council Members:

My name is Donald Sakamoto and I am the President of Citizens for a Fair Americans with Disability Act Ride who advocates for riders of TheBus and The Handi-Van. Today, I want to focus my concerns on the proposed Bill 89 FD1, which would impose a cap on the number of individuals on low income who may qualify for reduced fares on TheBus. Many riders are people who live from Kaimuki/Kapahulu to Waianae, through central O`ahu, and around the North shore to the east side including Kaneohe where I live.

I do not agree that this is the appropriate time to do a cap on the number of individuals on fixed low income who can qualify for a subsidized fare to ride TheBus. The pandemic has placed restrictions in multiple areas and we the citizens of Hawaii are experiencing the largest economic hardship of all time! This is not the time to be deliberating a cap!

On December 11, 2020I received an email from the Federal Transit Administration (See attached email) that "In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, FTA today announced additional actions to improve access to grant funding and provide relief from certain regulatory and administrative requirements. Specifically, FTA will extend access to emergency relief funding for operations and allow more time for transit agencies to meet regulatory requirements for the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP), Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (PTSCTP) regulations, as well as several reporting and compliance reviews.

FTA has extended the eligibility for formula funding under the Emergency Relief Program to be used to pay for operating expenses. Funding may now cover operating expenses related to COVID-19 recovery through January 20, 2022 at 100-percent federal share. FTA also issued two Notices of Enforcement Discretion:

Advising FTA grantees that it will refrain from taking enforcement action regarding the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) regulation until July 21, 2021.

Advising FTA grantees that it will refrain from taking enforcement action against any grantee subject to the Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (PTSCTP) regulation training requirements until August 21, 2022.

FTA previously announced a first round of administrative relief actions earlier this year, including expanding the federal government's share of operating expenses and other COVID-19 related expenses to 100 percent."

The following are questions that I have regarding Bill 89 FD1:

- 1) Has the Department of Community Services and Department of Transportation Services researched similar cities in other states to learn if they have a cap on the number of low-income riders who may qualify for a reduced fare?
- 2) Has the Department of Transportation Services explored the recent FTA's plans to extend the eligibility for formula funding under the Emergency Relief Program to pay for operating expenses before proposing any caps or fare increases?

I appreciate the opportunity to come before you to share my views and I hope we can all work together for better public transportation services for the low-income citizens of Oahu.

Most Respectfully,

Donald K. Sakamoto

President, CFADAR

From: usdotfta@info.dot.gov
To: cfadarhonoluluhi@aol.com
Sent: 12/11/2020 11:14:19 AM Hawaiian Standard Time
Subject: FTA Announces Additional Administrative Relief for Transit Agencies During COVID-19 Public Health Emergency

In response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, FTA today announced additional actions to improve access to grant funding and provide relief from certain regulatory and administrative requirements. Specifically, FTA will extend access to emergency relief funding for operations and allow more time for transit agencies to meet regulatory requirements for the Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP), Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program (PTSCTP) regulations, as well as several reporting and compliance reviews.

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FTA previously announced a first round of administrative relief actions earlier this year, including expanding the federal government's share of operating expenses and other COVID-19 related expenses to 100 percent. More information about FTA's latest administrative relief actions is available under Frequently Asked Questions.

Links:

[News Release](#)

[PTASP Notice of Enforcement Discretion](#)

[PTSCTP Notice of Enforcement Discretion](#)

[PTASP Technical Assistance Center](#)

[Public Transportation Safety Certification Training Program \(PTSCTP\)](#)

[FTA-Sponsored Training Courses](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) from FTA Grantees Regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

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TO: Members of the Honolulu City Council

FROM: Natalie Iwasa
808-395-3233

DATE: Wednesday, December 16, 2020

SUBJECT: Bill 89, FD1, Public Transit Fares – **COMMENT**

Aloha Chair Kobayashi and Councilmembers,

Thank you for allowing testimony on Bill 89, FD1 and the proposed FD2 set the fare structure for public transit, including TheBus and rail.

The bill calls for one fare for bus and rail. While this will make it easy for people to transfer from one system to the next, my concern is for bus riders who will never ride rail. Fares will have to be higher to cover the cost of rail. People who have a choice between driving a car or riding the bus may then decide to drive instead, adding to traffic problems in areas not served by rail.

Please add a bus-only fare.