



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Transportation
House Committee on Energy & Environmental Protection
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By

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And

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SB 965 SD2 – RELATING TO GREEN TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Chairs Todd and Lowen, Vice Chairs Kila and Cochran, and Members of the Committees:

The University of Hawai'i supports the intent of SB 965 SD2, which aims to improve the quality of life in Hawai'i by establishing objectives and policies for transportation systems, infrastructure, and projects that incorporate green infrastructure.

The College of Social Science supports this bill and agrees that a representative from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning (DURP) be included on the Green Transportation Infrastructure Task Force. DURP faculty members have expertise on transportation planning, sustainable cities, landscaping, and climate change, and are willing to work with the Task Force for the benefit of Hawai'i.

Incorporating sustainable design concepts and green infrastructure in transportation systems can have a positive impact on the environment and quality of life in Hawai'i, and it is essential to take steps to address the effects of climate change and promote sustainability in our communities.

The benefits of green infrastructure are many. Environmentally, Green infrastructure can improve water quality, reduce flooding, buffer climate change impacts, expand wildlife habitat, and enhance biodiversity. Socially, Green infrastructure can improve community well-being and public health by lowering rates of respiratory illness and improving mental health. Economically, green Infrastructure can reduce the stress on traditional gray infrastructure increasing its lifespan and reducing the long-term costs of their maintenance and operation. Moreover, by enhancing a community's aesthetic character, green infrastructure can bolster a neighborhood's economic productivity multiplying the investments made by business owners and community members. In summary, we support SB 965 SD2 because the benefits of green infrastructure far outweigh its costs and would provide immediate benefits to the residents and visitors to

the State of Hawai'i. By incorporating live foliage, trees, and green infrastructure, we can create a visual and sound barrier between vehicles and other modes of pedestrian, bicycle, and multi-modal transit to enhance the quality of transportation. Furthermore, research has shown that green infrastructure could produce significant improvements to mental health and have positive psychological benefits in a community.

We are particularly pleased to see that this bill includes the establishment of a diverse green transportation infrastructure task force, which will examine, evaluate, and develop best practices for the Department of Transportation to guide, design, implement, and maintain green transportation infrastructure in transportation systems and projects. It is important to have experts who can provide insights into how we can incorporate green infrastructure into our transportation systems to minimize stormwater runoff, reduce the urban heat island effect, and encourage the removal, sequestration, and storage of pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 965 SD2.