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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Tuesday, April 2, 2024 — 4:00 p.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SB 3021 SD2 HD1, Relating to Transportation.

Dear Chair Yamashita 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 SB 3021 SD2 HD1 and offers amendments. This bill renames the Electric Bicycle and Electric Moped Rebate Program to the Electric Mobility Rebate Program and expands eligibility as well as the potential rebate amount.

We enthusiastically support the proposed program improvements that clarify the current electric mobility devices definitions, provide universal eligibility for all Hawai'i residents, and increase the per-person funding for those who may need additional financial support to access electric mobility devices. Although the current program has helped almost 300 people, it still has approximately \$600,000 remaining and hasn't achieved its full potential impact. The bill's proposed enhancements will help the program achieve this potential, replicating the success of a similar City of Denver e-bike subsidy program¹ and providing the following beneficial impacts:

- Deliver greater mode shift and reduced emissions, helping to replace on average more than 100,000 vehicle miles weekly;
- Improve access to opportunities and destinations for those who need it by providing more meaningful subsidies since cost remains one of the largest barriers for lower-income residents, based on the Hawai'i State Energy Office's 2023 outreach results²;
- Ensure the program's voucher influences buying decisions, as intended (Denver residents overwhelmingly said the voucher made the difference when deciding to buy an e-bike).

We also strongly prefer required implementation of a point-of-sale rebate as it helps guarantee that upfront costs do not create a barrier for other interested friends and family members, ensuring equitable access to the program.³

¹ <https://www.denverpost.com/2023/01/05/ebike-rebate-program-denver-2023/>

² Presentation available upon request from the Hawai'i State Energy Office (December 2023 virtual briefing)

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Electric mobility devices can transform our community's transportation habits and help provide real transportation choices. We look forward to the continued success of the program.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs