

Draft Letter of Support - Energy Security Waste Reduction Plan

HEADER PENDING

DATE TBD

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Aloha,

This letter is written on behalf of the State of Hawai'i Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Advisory Committee. The Committee is writing to express our support for Hawai'i Department of Transportation (HDOT)'s draft Energy Security Waste Reduction Plan (ESWRP or Plan). The plan provides a roadmap to reduce the transportation emissions and expand affordable transportation options for all residents. This includes strategies to improve the state's multimodal infrastructure – including pedestrian, bicycling, and transit amenities.

The SRTS program (established via Act 244, SLH 2023) encourages keiki to walk, bike, and roll to school through roadway safety improvements. The SRTS special fund is particularly important for improving multimodal infrastructure, since it is one of the few state funding sources dedicated to pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects where it is needed most – within a one-mile radius of public schools. SRTS projects range from physical infrastructure improvements like new sidewalks, lighting and shared-use trails, to softer solutions like walking school buses and trip trackers to encourage healthier active living.

Although current transportation planning and decision-making have provided important SRTS projects and have added facilities through Complete Streets approaches, many schools remain less accessible for keiki walking or rolling to school. The lack of connected, safe and comfortable bike and pedestrian networks puts keiki at risk and leads to negative public health outcomes. An analysis of Hawai'i EMS calls found that pedestrian and bicycling injuries to children are most likely to occur during the hours they are traveling to and from school.¹ These safety challenges have resulted in Hawai'i being ranked the 12th most dangerous state to walk and bike.²

As outlined in the Committee's most recent Report to Legislature, SRTS programs produce significant environmental, social, and health benefits.³ National research shows that SRTS programs can:

¹ <https://www.hiphi.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/SRTS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>.

² <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/dangerous-by-design/>

³ <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HWY-S-25-2.45019-DOT-Report-for-Act-244-SLH-2023-Safe-Routes-to-School.pdf>

- **Increase the amount of students walking and biking to school:** A study of 53 schools in four states (FL, MS, WA, and WI) found that schools with SRTS projects increased walking and bicycling to school by 37 percent.⁴
- **Reduce pedestrian injuries in school zones:** A study of 47 schools in California found that SRTS infrastructure improvements resulted in a 75 percent reduction in collisions involving people of all ages walking and bicycling.⁵
- **Reduce vehicle travel and congestion:** In 2009, school travel by private vehicle accounted for 10 to 14 percent of all automobile trips made during morning rush hour across the U.S.⁶ Locally, there is a large opportunity to replace vehicle-trips with walking and biking, as an estimated 55 percent of all trips in Honolulu are 3 miles or less — many of which may be school or student-related travel.⁷

The need for SRTS infrastructure is widespread, as a preliminary analysis identified more than \$800 million in SRTS projects across the state. Implementation of these projects can produce wide-spread benefits, as approximately 77% of Hawai'i residents live within one mile of a school.⁸

We appreciate that the ESWRP broadly discusses SRTS, and its incorporation in the 2045 Unconstrained Multimodal Network and Implementation Plan. We commend HDOT for developing the ESWRP and look forward to plan implementation. The SRTS Committee can be a partner in this process and provide support as needed.

Mahalo,
Abbey Seitz
Safe Routes to School Advisory Chair

⁴ Orion Stewart, Anne Vernez Moudon, and Charlotte Claybrooke, "Multistate Evaluation of Safe Routes to School Programs," American Journal of Health Promotion: January/February 2014, Vol. 28, No. sp3, pp. S89-S96, 2014.

⁵ David Ragland, S Pande, J Bigham and FJ Cooper, "Ten years later: examining the long-term impact of the California Safe Routes to School program," Presented at the Transportation Research Board 93rd Annual Meeting, Washington DC. 2014. <http://docs.trb.org/prp/14-4226.pdf>.

⁶ Donald N., Brown A., Marchetti L., Pedroso M, "U.S. School Travel 2009: An Assessment of Trends," American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 41(2), 146-151, 2011.

⁷ Reed, Trevore, "Micromobility Potential in the US, UK and German," Inrix, 2019. https://flintbeat.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/INRIX_Micromobility_Report_English.pdf

⁸ SRTS Advisory Committee, "Annual Report to the 33rd Hawai'i State Legislature," December, 2024. <https://hidot.hawaii.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/HWY-S-25-2.45019-DOT-Report-for-Act-244-SLH-2023-Safe-Routes-to-School.pdf>.