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February 18, 2020

Representative Sylvia Luke, Chair
Representative Ty J.K. Cullen, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

Dear Chair Luke, Vice Chair Cullen and Committee Members:

RE: HB 1676, HD1 Relating to Highway Safety

Thank you for hearing HB 1676, HD1. I testify in support of this measure but ask that it be amended to include all counties that choose to participate.

As our populations grow, so does traffic, leading to more traffic congestion and greater driver frustration. Frustration, in turn, can lead to more carelessness or more risk taking, such as pushing the envelope on running red lights to save a few precious seconds.

There are jurisdictions on the mainland and around the world where traffic laws are ignored and driving is chaotic. Though some might think that Hawai'i has already achieved that state, in truth we have managed to retain some respect for law, even traffic laws, and we need to do what we can to assure that our standards do not deteriorate, and perhaps even move up a notch or two.

The preamble to HB 1676 is an excellent summary of our history with red-light enforcement, and why we should authorize the counties to try pilot programs. It may be necessary to prove to the public that such programs can be administered fairly and are in the best interest of the traveler—whether driver, bicyclist, or pedestrian. HB 1676, HD1 could provide that opportunity for those counties that wish to participate.

However, though Part I of HB 1676 talks about authorizing "any impacted county to implement the photo red light imaging detector system pilot program," Part II says "'County' means a county with a resident population of greater than five hundred thousand." We would respectfully request that the opportunity to participate be open to all counties, or that the population threshold be lowered to 200,000. A corresponding amendment would have to be made to the section designating area boundaries.

I ask for your favorable action on an amended HB 1676, HD1.

Respectfully Submitted,

Harry Kim
MAYOR