February 2, 2026

The Honorable Lorraine R. Inouye, Chair
The Honorable Brandon J.C. Elefante, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Transportation
Hawaii State Legislature
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Inouye and Vice Chair Elefante:

As representatives of leading public health and safety organizations working to advance roadway and auto safety laws that prevent deaths and injuries and contain crash costs, we urge you to support the enactment of Senate Bill (SB) 2463 and House Bill (HB) 1827. This legislation will lower the *per se* limit of alcohol-impaired driving to .05 percent blood alcohol concentration (BAC), deter drunk driving and save lives.

Drunk driving is a deadly, growing and costly threat to Hawaii families. In 2024, there were an overall estimated 102[1] fatalities on Hawaii roads according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) which is a 10 percent increase since 2015.[2] Additionally, forty-two (42) percent (39 people killed) of Hawaii traffic deaths in 2023 involved drunk driving which is the highest proportion of any state and much higher than the national average of 30 percent.[3] Moreover, traffic fatalities involving drunk driving increased 30 percent in the state from 2014 to 2023.[4]

In addition to the physical and emotional impact, these crashes impose a tremendous financial burden. Traffic crashes cause $580 million of economic damage to Hawaii annually which is equivalent to a "crash tax" of $410 per resident, according to a 2019 analysis.[5] When updated for inflation alone, in 2025, costs would equate to $732 million to the state.[6] Additionally, in 2019, drunk driving crashes cost employers across the country $8 billion each year with 81 percent of those costs coming in crashes while off the job.[7] When updated for inflation alone, the costs escalate to $10.1 billion each year.[8]

The impact of drunk driving is clearly measurable at .05 percent BAC by research which shows significant impairment.[9] Drivers have reduced coordination, decreased ability to track moving objects, difficulty steering and diminished response to emergency situations.[10] The risk of being killed in a single-vehicle crash with BACs of .05 to .079 percent is up to 21 times higher than for drivers without measurable alcohol.[11]

Drunk driving clearly is a serious problem that requires solutions which are strongly supported by research[12] and the public health and safety community. Advancing .05 percent BAC legislation will reduce dangerous drinking and driving across all levels of impairment, including high BAC, to prevent deaths and injuries. If all states adopted a .05 percent BAC or lower law, fatal alcohol crashes are estimated to decline 11 percent, and 1,790 lives would be saved each year.[13] Lowering the limit of BAC is a countermeasure successfully employed around the world but underused in the United States. More than 100 countries have .05 percent BAC or lower limits. In these countries average alcohol consumption is equal or higher to that in the United States, but they have less deaths caused by drunk driving.[14]

Opponents may claim that lowering the BAC will impact the economy by decreasing alcohol sales, but reducing BAC limits does not discourage alcohol consumption.[15] It does discourage driving after drinking. When Utah reduced its BAC limit from .08 to .05 percent, alcohol sales and tourism went up while drunk driving arrests went down.[16]

The data are clear, the lifesaving benefits are certain and the justification for action is compelling. We urge you to take this critical step to seriously address and prevent drunk driving by advancing SB 2463/HB 1827. Every death caused by an alcohol-related crash on Hawaii roads forever changes the lives of families and communities and can be prevented. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Chase, President
Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety

David A. Sleet, Ph.D, Former Associate Dir for Science
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Co-founder, *.05 Saves Lives* Coalition

Natalie A. Draisin, Director, North American Office &
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FIA Foundation

Honorable T. Bella Dinh-Zarr, Former Vice Chair
National Transportation Safety Board
Co-founder, *.05 Saves Lives* Coalition

Janette Fennell, Founder and President
Kids and Car Safety

Thomas M. Louizou, Former Regional Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
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Patricia Rillera, Regional Executive Director, Hawaii
Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)

Andrew McGuire, Executive Director
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Lorraine Martin, CEO
National Safety Council

Marilena Amoni, Former Associate Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Co-founder, *.05 Saves Lives* Coalition

Stephen Hargarten, MD, MPH, Founding President
Society for the Advancement of Violence and Injury
Research (SAVIR)

Karen Sisson, Board Member
SAFE Coalition

Additional organizations that are not signers but recommend or support .05 percent BAC policy:

American Medical Association (AMA)
American Public Health Association (APHA)
Association for the Advancement of Automotive Medicine (AAAM)
Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA)
National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM)
National Road Safety Foundation
National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)
Remove Intoxicated Drivers (RID)
Safe States Alliance
Society for Public Health Education
Transportation Alternatives
Vision Zero Network
World Health Organization (WHO)

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[1] Traffic Safety Facts: Crash Stats, Early Estimate of Motor Vehicle Traffic Fatalities in 2024, NHTSA, April 2025, DOT HS 813 710, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813710.

[2] State Traffic Safety Information for Hawaii, NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm.

[3] State Traffic Safety Information for Hawaii, NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm; Traffic Safety Facts: 2023 Data, Alcohol-Impaired Driving, NHTSA, May 2025, DOT HS 813 713, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813713.

[4] State Traffic Safety Information for Hawaii, NHTSA, available at https://cdan.dot.gov/STSI/stsi.htm.

[5] The Economic and Societal Impact of Motor Vehicle Crashes, 2019, NHTSA, Feb. 2023, DOT HS 813 403, available at https://crashstats.nhtsa.dot.gov/Api/Public/ViewPublication/813403.

[6] CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, January 2019 to January 2025 dollars, available here.

[7] Cost of Motor Vehicle Crashes to Employers 2019; Network of Employers for Traffic Safety, available at https://trafficsafety.org/road-safety-resources/public-resources/cost-of-motor-vehicle-crashes-to-employers-2019/.

[8] CPI Inflation Calculator, BLS, January 2019 to January 2025 dollars, available here.

[9] NTSB, .05 BAC Safety Briefing Facts, February 2017, available here.

[10] MADD, *What is .08?* Available at: http://www.madd.org/drunk-driving/about/understanding-08.html.

[11] Fell, Jim C., Voas, Robert B, *The effectiveness of a 0.05 blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for driving in the United States*, PIRE. June 2014.

[12] Fell, Jim C., Voas, Robert B, *The effectiveness of a 0.05 blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for driving in the United States*, PIRE. June 2014.

[13] NORC: Fell JC & Scherer M, Estimation of the Potential Effectiveness of Lowering the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Limit for Driving from 0.08 to 0.05 Grams per Deciliter in the United States, 2017. Available at: https://bit.ly/2E5pIiq.

[14] NTSB, .05 BAC Safety Briefing Facts, February 2017, available here.

[15] NTSB, .05 BAC Safety Briefing Facts, February 2017, available here.

[16] Leaver, Jennifer, The State of Utah's Travel and Tourism Industry 2019, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute University of Utah, September 2020. Utah Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, Annual Reports 2018, 2019 and 2020, available at: https://abc.utah.gov/about-dabc/annual-reports/. 17th

Annual DUI Report to the Utah Legislature, Utah Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice, 2019. Available at: https://le.utah.gov/interim/2019/pdf/00004834.pdf.