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Item #1
Bill 8 (2016)

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Testimony in OPPOSITION to Bill 8 "Relating to Complete Streets"

The American Heart Association **opposes Bill 8,** but welcomes the opportunity to work with Councilmembers, the City and County administration, and community members to identify effective ways to better implement complete streets policy in our communities.

The AHA appreciates Honolulu Councilmembers' recent indication of a willingness to work with Hawaii's Complete Streets Coalition representatives to develop policy measures that would lead to better communication between the city administration and the Council, and more opportunities for public input into the complete streets planning and implementation process. However, we feel that Bill 8 would not effectively achieve those goals and as proposed could result in the inadvertent hindrance of future complete street projects. Therefore we ask that the bill be deferred.

The AHA remains committed to nationwide implementation of complete streets policy. Working jointly with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to create Voices for Healthy Kids®, our goal is to create environments that support health so all people in the United States can eat healthier foods and be more active.

People of all ages and abilities want to go places safely and conveniently. Whether they drive, walk, bike, or ride a bus or train, when people are on a complete street they know they are on a road designed to safely accommodate their preferred mode of travel. Complete streets policies support more choices, so that everyone can get to the places that they need to go. Communities across the nation have begun to work toward making our streets safer and more convenient for all users (including bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders of all ages and abilities) through complete streets policies.

"Complete streets" is a term describing roads that allow safe and convenient travel for everyone who uses them and for all modes of transportation. These streets have infrastructure and design components, such as safe street crossings, accessible sidewalks, and bicycle lanes, that make it easy to walk to shops, bike to work, or cross the street to and from a train station. Complete streets policies are laws or resolutions that aim to create a safe transportation network for everyone by requiring that every future road construction and reconstruction project makes a street safe and comfortable for all users—kids, families, older adults, or people with disabilities—whether they are walking, pushing a stroller, using a wheelchair, bicycling, driving, or taking public transportation. Although it is also important for communities to consider initiating new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects, complete streets policies don't require a town or county to go back and fix every street. Instead, they just require good practices from now onward.

Complete streets are safe, people-friendly, and support good health. Complete street design may offer many benefits to communities, including:

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☐ Reduced traffic injuries
☐ Improved visibility of people walking and bicycling
☐ Improved air quality
☐ Improved friendliness of the street environment, for walking, bicycling, shopping, waiting for the bus, chatting with neighbors, or playing.

Street-scale improvements, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, and safe street crossings, will better connect communities and provide kids more opportunities to be physically active. Engaging in daily physical activity reduces the risk of obesity, coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, and some types of cancer. Multiple studies have also shown that more active kids have higher levels of cardiovascular fitness. In fact, studies show that people in walkable neighborhoods generally get about 35 to 45 more minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week and are less likely to be overweight or obese than those in low-walkability neighborhoods. But not only that; kids may also perform better academically and have increased levels of focus and good behavior in the classroom. Given that 75 percent of teens are not getting enough physical activity, it is critical to find ways to increase physical activity opportunities in the places where youth live, learn, and play. Complete streets approaches make it safe and convenient for people to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines.

Complete streets have also been found to benefit local economies. In a study of 37 complete streets projects by Smart Growth America, "complete streets projects were related to broader economic gains like increased employment and higher property values." What's more, the safety improvements of complete streets can have financial benefits. The report found that complete streets saved $18.1 million in collision and injury costs in one year.

Planning and transportation agencies at the city, county, regional, or state level can help communities become safer for walking and bicycling by promoting and implementing comprehensive complete streets policies.

Many streets today are not built to share and are unsafe for people who walk, bike, or run. Complete streets can improve the quality of life in our communities by creating safe and accessible routes for all travelers. By encouraging our leaders and city planners to incorporate complete streets into new road construction, reconstruction projects, or major development projects, we can build a safe, healthy community together. Let us work together to support streets built to share™.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald B. Weisman

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