



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 10, 2010

Contacts: Rep. K. Mark Takai 330-6275
Rep. Sharon Har 258-0313

Legislators Urge Governor to Accept Final EIS for Honolulu's Rail Project *39 State Representatives Sign Letter to Governor*

(HONOLULU) – Thirty-nine members of the Hawaii House of Representatives signed a letter to Governor Linda Lingle urging her to promptly review and accept the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project as soon as it is released.

“Governor Lingle needs to move forward on this project without any additional meetings, studies or delays,” said Rep. K. Mark Takai (D-34), who initiated the letter, which was hand-delivered to the Governor’s Executive Chamber this morning.

“The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) acknowledges that 13 State agencies have been providing comments to the City to finalize the FEIS. Additionally, City officials have noted that they provided Governor Lingle with a copy of the administrative draft of the FEIS, which is 99 percent of the final document,” said Rep. Sharon Har (D-40), who also signed the letter.

“The Federal Transit Authority Head Peter Rogoff also stated that resolution of the remaining issues is not expected to alter FTA’s support for the project,” Takai added.

“President Obama and the Federal Transit Administration have said that more than \$1.55 billion will be provided for the construction of Honolulu Rail Project,” Takai continued. “We cannot afford to turn our backs on this federal support. This is our very last opportunity to make rail a reality for Honolulu.”

“The people of West Oahu have waited far too long for meaningful traffic relief,” Har said. “The only way to alleviate traffic is to get people out of their cars. Rail provides residents with that alternative. Moreover, during this unprecedented economic downturn, rail will provide us with the kind of economic growth we need to help our economy rebound.”

The 39 members of the House signing the letter represent more than three-fourths of the 51-member House of Representatives.

The copy of the letter is attached.

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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

February 10, 2010

The Honorable Linda Lingle
Governor
State of Hawaii
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Governor Lingle:

We, the undersigned members of the Hawaii House of Representatives, strongly request that you review and accept the final Environmental Impact Statement for the Honolulu Rail Transit Project in a timely manner once the document is released by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Along with dealing with our transportation woes, the Honolulu rail transit project is the biggest economic stimulus project on the horizon that will provide thousands of jobs and create tax revenue for our state and county governments to fund essential services currently being cut.

The Obama Administration, in its budget submission to Congress, earlier this month gave the Honolulu rail project a vote of confidence by requesting \$55 million in federal funds for rail in FY 2011. Peter Rogoff, head of the Federal Transit Administration, told the local media his agency will sign an agreement by next year to provide another \$1.55 billion in construction funds.

The Legislature voted in 2005 to allow the City and County of Honolulu to assess the half-percent GET surcharge to provide the local share of the Honolulu rail project funding. You allowed this measure to become law without your signature.

Our own Legislative Construction Industry Task Force released a report last month that shows how essential the Honolulu Rail Transit Project is to the health of the state's construction industry. Rail can help during a time when the construction cycle is still in the midst of a projected seven- to eight-year downturn. The number of jobs that rail will bring can help "smooth out" the construction activity decline.

Most importantly, the legislative task force report stated:

“One overarching consensus was the need to support the Honolulu Rail Transit Project. While other plans for construction in both the public and private sectors will be helpful, no other project on the horizon has the same potential for generating jobs, assisting local business and contributing to Hawaii’s overall economy.”

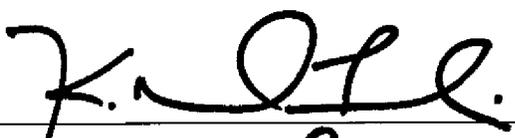
The construction task force report also stated that, “With commitments of federal funding, the rail project will also have the effect of monies from outside the State being infused into our economy.”

The FTA informed the city that if any decision is made to change the rail system from elevated to at-grade, the FTA would have to start the environmental review process again. Our rail project has gone through five years of extensive planning and environmental review. As the FTA stated, making changes to the project now would put it back to square one and possibly halt the project indefinitely.

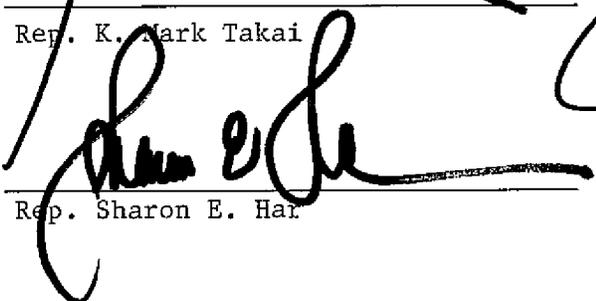
The bottom-line is that the FTA and the U.S. Department of Transportation see nothing at this point to stop Honolulu’s rail transit project from continuing to go forward and are committed to continue working with the city to help make rail transit a reality for Honolulu.

Ultimately, Oahu residents in November 2008 voted in support of the rail project. The people have spoken. There is no major construction project other than rail that is shovel-ready. The longer you delay Oahu’s and our state’s economic recovery, the longer you will leave our workers unemployed and struggling during this economic recession. We, the undersigned, therefore request that you act expeditiously in accepting the final Environmental Impact Statement once it is released by the Federal Transit Administration.

Sincerely,



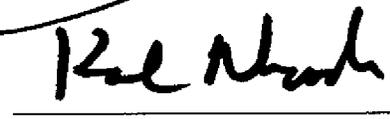
Rep. K. Mark Takai



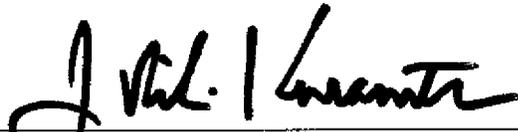
Rep. Sharon E. Harris



Rep. Joey Manahan



Rep. Karl Rhoads



Rep. Jon Riki Karamatsu



Rep. Joseph M. Souki



Rep. Karen Leinani Awana



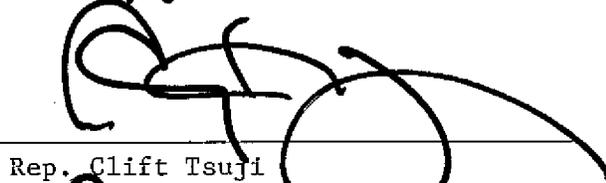
Rep. Henry J.C. Aquino



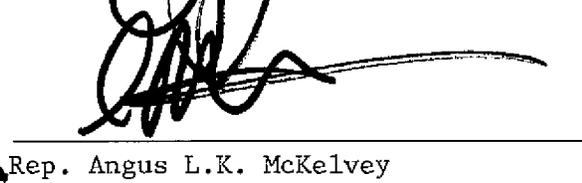
Rep. Faye J. Hanohano



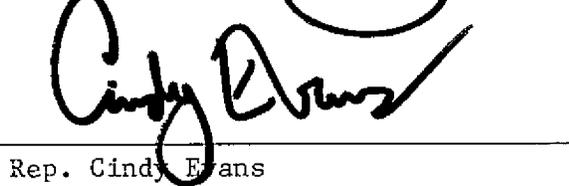
Rep. Glenn Wakai



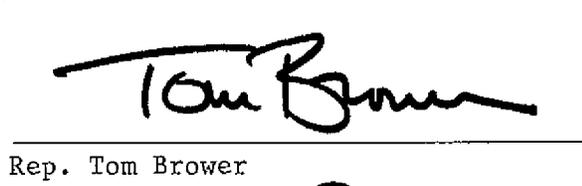
Rep. Clift Tsuji



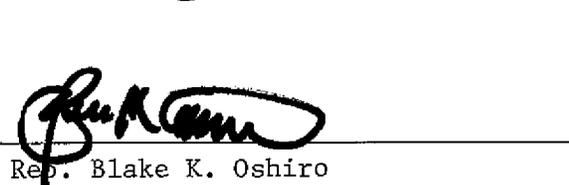
Rep. Angus L.K. McKelvey



Rep. Cindy Evans



Rep. Tom Brower



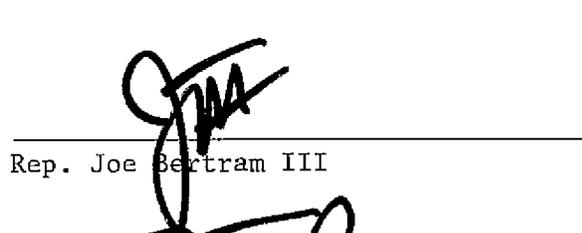
Rep. Blake K. Oshiro



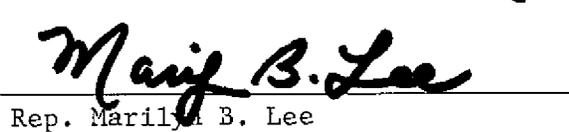
Rep. Rida Cabanilla



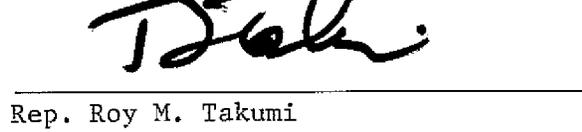
Speaker Calvin K.Y. Say



Rep. Joe Bertram III



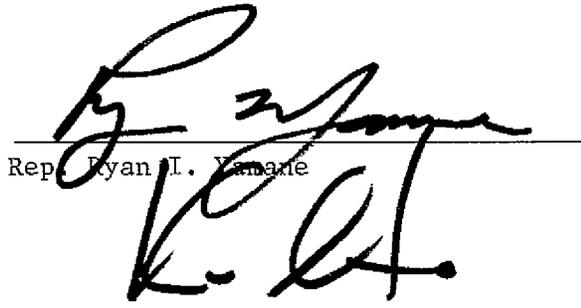
Rep. Marilyn B. Lee



Rep. Roy M. Takumi



Rep. Pono Chong



Rep. Ryan I. Yamane



Rep. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran



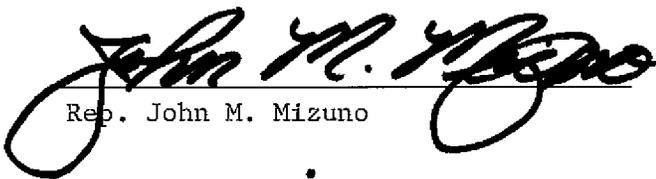
Rep. Ken Ito



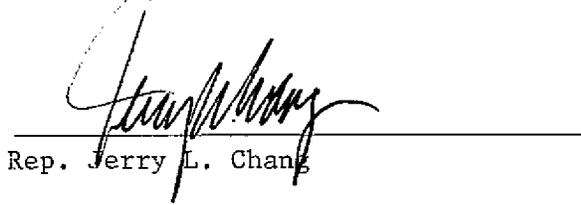
Rep. Kimberly Marcos Pine



Rep. Mark M. Nakashima



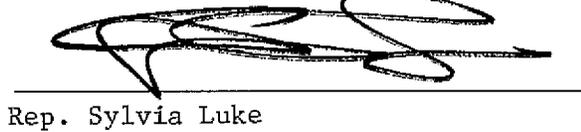
Rep. John M. Mizuno



Rep. Jerry L. Chang



Rep. Hermina M. Morita



Rep. Sylvia Luke



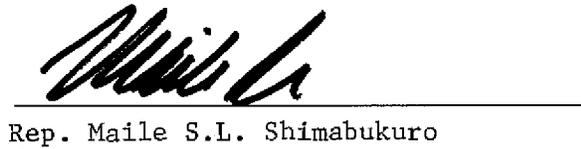
Rep. Robert N. Herkes



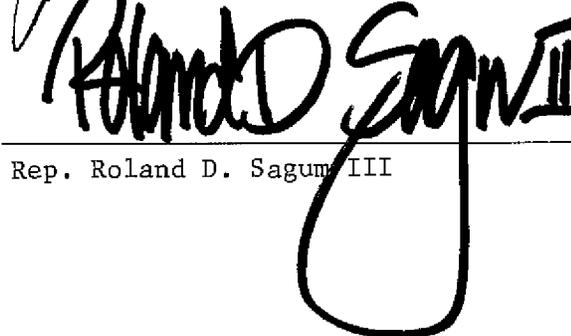
Rep. Denny Coffman



Rep. James Kunane Tokioka



Rep. Maile S.L. Shimabukuro



Rep. Roland D. Sagum III



Rep. Mele Carroll

Governor Linda Lingle

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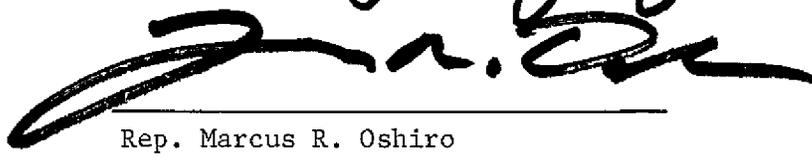
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Rep. Michael Y. Magaoay



Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita



Rep. Marcus R. Oshiro