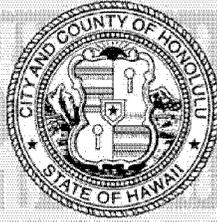


NEWS RELEASE



Office of the Mayor

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Release No. M-60-08

July 14, 2008

FORMER STATE DIRECTORS FIRMLY SUPPORT RAIL TRANSIT

Four former State transportation directors and a former State environmental health director visited Mayor Mufi Hannemann today to express their unequivocal support for the City's rail mass transit project.

Appearing with the mayor at a news conference, the group unanimously concurred that solid geographic, economic and environmental reasoning makes rail transit the best option for Oahu's present and future transportation needs.

"Who better to weigh in on the benefits of rail transit than these former officials who have years of experience and have assessed all aspects of transportation over the years?" Mayor Hannemann said. "A public health perspective is also very important, and together these former officials represent every state administration since that of former Governor John Burns."

There is no room to build additional freeway capacity into downtown Honolulu from West Oahu, where most new development is taking place, said Kazu Hayashida, State transportation director from 1994 to 2000 under then-Governor Ben Cayetano.

Adding a second deck to the H-1 freeway would raise serious concerns about visual blight, and would simply funnel more cars onto streets that don't have the capacity to handle them, Hayashida said.

Ed Hirata, State transportation director from 1986 to 1991 under then-Governor John Waihee, said building the rail system will have the same effect of building 6 to 8 new freeway lanes, but will give commuters an alternative to driving. Hirata said he is very surprised that Governor Linda Lingle does not seem to strongly support Honolulu's current rail transit project.

Rod Haraga, who was Lingle's transportation director from 2003 to 2006, said he had been directed to cooperate fully with the City on the rail system jointly proposed by Lingle and the former City administration in 2003.

Haraga said he is "quite disappointed that we have doubters and naysayers now."

"Let's get it done," Haraga said. "No more studies."

Honolulu has lost valuable years and hundreds of millions of dollars as previous rail transit plans were sidetracked for various reasons, noted Fujio Matsuda, State transportation director from 1963 to 1973 under then-Governor John Burns.

For decades, experts have concluded that rail transit is Oahu's best option, he said.

"I don't know how many times we have to study this before the answer will change," Matsuda said. "This has been studied to death already."

In fact, technological improvements make rail transit better than ever, and gasoline prices will likely continue to soar, he added.

Matsuda said his son lives in Portland, which has a very popular rail system. "They love it," he said. "Many large cities, if they didn't have rail, there's no way they could function."

James Kumagai, State deputy director for environmental health from 1975 to 1980 under then-Governor George Ariyoshi, said rail transit has long been viewed by health experts as an excellent way to limit vehicle emissions and ensure a healthy environment at the local level. The link between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming has greatly broadened rail's appeal from a health perspective nationally and internationally, he said.

Mayor Hannemann stressed that none of the former directors are involved in the rail project or stand to gain financially from it. He concluded by saying: "Rail is the right thing to do. It is the pono thing to do. That's why we are committed to making it happen."

-30-

Contact: Bill Brennan, 527-6928