

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Inouye:

Thank you for your letter expressing the importance of the proposed Honolulu High Capacity Transit Corridor Project to Hawaii's economy, and asking for my personal involvement in resolving outstanding issues regarding the project alignment through Honolulu International Airport.

Please be assured that I understand the importance of the rail project to Hawaii's economy, as does Federal Transit Administrator Peter Rogoff. We also understand the project's importance as a response to the severe traffic congestion on the south shore of Oahu, and in support of plans by the City and County of Honolulu (the City) to focus future development around new rail stations. The project rates well against the project-justification criteria used by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to evaluate major transit projects proposed for FTA New Starts funding. Consequently, we were pleased to include an initial funding recommendation for the project in the President's Fiscal Year 2011 budget.

I understand from Administrator Rogoff that staff at both the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and FTA have been working diligently to bring closure to airport-related issues as efficiently as possible, consistent with the requirements placed on both agencies by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Administrator Rogoff has personally coordinated these efforts with FAA executives to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to finalize this matter.

I am happy to report substantial progress. FAA expedited its analysis of airport impacts and mitigation costs of the proposed on-airport alignment. FAA and FTA met with the City to convey these findings and discuss alternatives. The City offered a minor adjustment to the alignment to avoid conflicts with runway safety zones. FAA expedited their analysis of the adjusted alignment and provided the necessary documentation for the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Administrator Rogoff reports that the FEIS will be ready for publication and public review very shortly.

If I can provide further information or assistance, please feel free to call me.

Sincerely yours,

Ray LaHood