
From: Borinsky, Susan (FTA)
To: Brown, Sonia (FTA); Welbes, Matt (FTA); Day, Elizabeth (FTA); Ryan, James (FTA)
Sent: 2/18/2010 10:00:00 AM
Subject: Meeting with Honolulu Councilmembers--March 9: consistent with TOA participation?

Sonia and Matt,

Four members of the Honolulu City Council (Apo, Garcia, Cachola, and Kobiashi) have asked to meet with TPE staff in DC on March 9, 9-10:30 AM. We are trying to identify specific agenda topics with them beforehand.

Peter has indicated that he would like to "sit in" on this meeting, although we have not conveyed that to the Councilmembers. Therese also may be interested in participating. Does the proposed day and time work for Peter and Therese?

If so, I need to confirm the meeting with the Councilmembers. If not, please suggest another time. I'd like to get back to them fairly quickly, especially if we need to change the meeting time.

Also, unless I hear otherwise, I'll try to get the large conference room on the 4th floor for the meeting, so that TOA folks can come and go at will.

Please advise. Susan B.

Newspaper article below:

Council panel OKs trip that uses transit funds

Honolulu Advertiser - Honolulu, Hawaii

Author: Sean Hao

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The Honolulu City Council's Transportation Committee voted 4-1 last week to spend \$8,000 to send four members to Washington, D.C., next month to discuss transit issues with federal officials.

The money was raised via a transit tax surcharge aimed at paying for the \$5.3 billion elevated commuter train running from East Kapolei to Ala Moana. The \$8,000 is coming out of \$50,000 already set aside by the council to hire a transit analyst. The council no longer expects to fill that job.

Instead, a portion of that money will be used to send council members Todd Apo, Romy Cachola, Nestor Garcia and Ann Kobayashi to the nation's capital to discuss transit matters with the Federal Transit Administration.

Cachola, Garcia, Rod Tam and Gary Okino voted for the measure and Charles Djou voted against.

Djou argued that council members should pay for such a trip out of their office budgets rather than with transit money.

"It is incredibly ironic that when we're having discussions worrying about whether or not there's sufficient funding for the rail- transit project that you're going to take monies from this project to go on this junket to D.C.," Djou said during Wednesday's hearing.

Separately, the committee voted to put the four members traveling to Washington into a so-called permitted interaction group. That allows the members to meet outside of a council meeting without violating the state Sunshine Law.

Both resolutions still need full council approval.

Council member Cachola denied that the March trip is a junket.

"The reason why I accepted the appointment to go there is because of my concern about the shortage of the amount of money to fund it and I want to hear from FTA how we can possibly do it without further burdening our taxpayers, not just now but in the future," Cachola said.

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