MEMORANDUM

TO: Secretary Ray LaHood
FROM: Peter Rogoff, Federal Transit Administrator
DATE: January 19, 2009
RE: Meeting with Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann

MEETING OVERVIEW

- Mayor Hannemann asked for a meeting with you while he is in town for a meeting of the Mayor's Association. The Mayor will apparently be unaccompanied at the meeting.

TOPIC OF MEETING & TALKING POINTS

- The Mayor will ask for any help that you can provide in advancing Honolulu's proposed rail project. He long ago promised the public that groundbreaking would happen by the end of 2009. He will also likely describe the risk that the state legislature will tap into tax revenues reserved for the project if construction does not begin very soon.

- FTA has been working diligently to bring the environmental review of the project to closure. Remaining tasks depend largely on actions by other agencies on schedules that are beyond FTA control – the Federal Aviation Administration for impacts on Honolulu International Airport and the Navy and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation for impacts on historic resources. Project opponents are expected to bring suit alleging non-compliance with federal environmental requirements. Consequently, anything less than full closure on all issues would put FTA, the City, and the project at risk in court.

- Talking points:
  - DOT very much wants to move the project forward as quickly as possible, consistent with the requirements placed on us by federal environmental law.
  - FTA will continue to give full attention to the environmental review and work with participating agencies to facilitate conclusions consistent with their responsibilities.

NOTABLE BACKGROUND

- The Hawaii congressional delegation has been very supportive of this project, particularly Senator Inouye.

- Hawaii Governor Lingle has been less supportive but has not taken any action that would impede development of the project or implementation of the major local funding source for the project. She has indicated that she will closely examine the environmental review documentation, as she has sign-off authority for the State aspect of that review.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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