Dear Mayor Hannemann:

Thank you for your letter dated December 11, 2009, in which you review the status of several unresolved issues associated with the environmental process for the Honolulu High-Capacity Transit Corridor Project. In your view, each of the issues will be resolved by or before the end of this month, at which point the final environmental impact statement could be made available to the public.

Although Federal Transit Administration (FTA) staff is working diligently to expedite resolution of all outstanding environmental issues, final resolution of some issues requires input from other parties to the proceedings. For example, the designated signatories to the section 106 National Historic Preservation Act programmatic agreement did not concur on the contents of the agreement on December 15th, as speculated in your letter. Rather, on December 18th, FTA received a request from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation seeking clarification of the Navy's role and responsibilities in the consultation process under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, as well as additional information. In the circumstances, it is highly questionable whether the section 106 consultation process, including execution of the programmatic agreement, can be completed by the end of the month. The National Environmental Policy Act process may not be completed by the end of the month either.

This project is important to the City and County of Honolulu. All parties have worked hard to get successfully to this point in the proceedings. It would be imprudent now not to follow through with respect to all required environmental processes in order to meet an arbitrary deadline.

Again, FTA staff is working diligently to expedite resolution of all outstanding environmental issues. I am confident that the environmental process will be completed as swiftly as possible but cannot commit to completing that process by the end of the month.

Sincerely,

DRAFT