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**From:** Denis J. Dwyer  
**To:** Farber, Brian (FTA)  
**Sent:** 12/4/2010 4:12:26 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Lingle Rail Consultant: 'Bus Is Good. Rail Is Bad.'

Brian,

The plan for a press conference was overtaken by a conference call with Governor-elect Abercrombie on the IMG study. The Governor-elect is to be inaugurated on Monday. He and his team are trying to figure out how best to deal with the study without having it overshadow the broader message that he wants his inauguration to send.

As I have more information, I will send it to you.

Denis

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DJD

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**From:** brian.farber@dot.gov <brian.farber@dot.gov>  
**To:** Denis J. Dwyer  
**Sent:** Fri Dec 03 20:47:43 2010  
**Subject:** Re: Lingle Rail Consultant: 'Bus Is Good. Rail Is Bad.'

Would you have Mayor Carlisle's prepared remarks for the press conference he's holding? Or can you get us a copy afterwards? If not, no big deal - we'll see them in reports sure to follow.

Have a good night and good weekend.

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**From:** Denis J. Dwyer [mailto:djdwyer@wms-jen.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 03, 2010 05:48 PM  
**To:** Farber, Brian (FTA)  
**Subject:** Lingle Rail Consultant: 'Bus Is Good. Rail Is Bad.'

Brian, FYI.  
Article below is from "Civil Beat" an online Honolulu Newspaper.

## Lingle Rail Consultant: 'Bus Is Good. Rail Is Bad.'

By [Adrienne LaFrance](#) 12/02/2010

One of the members of the team Gov. [Linda Lingle](#) hired to conduct an independent review of the finances of Honolulu's proposed [rail project](#) is an outspoken rail critic.

Tom Rubin is an expert in transit finance who began a [2004 lecture](#) on transit with this summary of his views: "Bus is good. Rail is bad."

Rubin came to [Honolulu](#) this fall to examine the project's finances under a \$350,000 contract from the state. The governor must sign off on the project before construction can begin and Lingle has expressed pessimism about the city's financial projections. The consultant's report was forwarded to the city Thursday, but its findings have not been made public.

Rubin answered his cell phone in response to several calls from Civil Beat, but said he wasn't able to hear anything. He didn't respond to e-mails, voicemails or a text message.

Rubin's longtime skepticism about rail stands out against Lingle's [call](#) for an "independent" economic analysis and financial assessment of the project. The state awarded a contract to Infrastructure Management Group (IMG) in September to spend three months crunching the city's numbers on rail. It's not clear how many people are working

with the IMG team, or whether Rubin's stance is countered by the inclusion of a longtime rail advocate, for example.

“The scope of work includes an analysis and evaluation of the capital costs to build the project as well as the operating and maintenance cost projections prepared by the City and County of Honolulu,” Lingle wrote in a [statement](#) at the time. “The work will include a determination of the reasonableness and accuracy of the City’s plans and revenue sources to fund the single largest, most expensive public works project that has ever been undertaken in Hawai‘i.”

The city has expressed skepticism about the need for the study and the validity of the research because of Lingle's well-known skepticism about the project. Her position on the project becomes moot Monday, when rail supporter [Neil Abercrombie](#) takes office. After he was elected, Abercrombie said Lingle's financial analysis wouldn't be a factor in his decision, just whether the the Environmental Impact Statement was done "correctly."

Lingle first began speaking publicly about her desire to launch an independent review last winter, when she invited rail critics to give a public presentation on their concerns in a State Capitol auditorium while then-Mayor [Mufi Hannemann](#) was in Washington D.C. to meet with federal rail officials. City officials then accused the governor of acting politically, rather than out of genuine concern about the project.

The inclusion of a vehement opponent on the study team only further raises doubts about the credibility of the unreleased report.

## Rubin has Long List of Anti-Rail Publications

Rubin, who is based in Oakland, has been a loud — and often polarizing — voice in transit debates across the country for decades. He worked for five years as the chief financial officer for what is now the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transit Authority, served for one year as a finance director at the Alameda-Contra Costa Transit District, and has served as a transit consultant since the mid-1990s with clients like the Bus Riders Union.

He's a longtime contributor to the [Reason Foundation](#), a nonprofit Libertarian think-tank, with published pieces such as:

- "[Why Rail Will Fail](#)"
- "[Ten Transit Myths: Misperceptions About Rail Transit in Los Angeles and the Nation](#)"
- An [analysis](#) of a Wisconsin commuter rail line in which Rubin deems its projected economic benefits are "not credible."

In June, [Rubin complained](#) to a Los Angeles Times reporter that an emphasis on rail transit instead of bus expansion has forced down public transit ridership. In July, he appears to have [posted a comment](#) after an article in the Wisconsin-based Daily Reporter questioning the validity of claims about transit-oriented development in a brusque response to a reader critical of his motives.

"I have over 35 years in the transit industry ... including, most likely, working on far more rail projects than you have ridden on," Rubin wrote. "At best, rail transit has some ability to move certain new projects from place to place in a community, but has shown very little ability to create development that would have not existed without the rail line."

Just last week, Rubin was [quoted](#) in The New York Times, describing high cost as "the big problem" with cities' rail expansion in recent decades.

## Prevedouros Met with Rubin

One of Honolulu's best-known anti-rail figures, engineer [Panos Prevedouros](#), said Rubin and IMG Chairman Steve Steckler sought him out as part of the Lingle-ordered review.

"I met Steve and Tom Rubin about one month ago, and basically it was an interview," Prevedouros said. "They wanted to have a firsthand opinion of what I thought about the rail. They wanted possible people they could contact to get better data. At the time, they were having a very hard time getting data from the city

and they were looking for the alternatives."

The city's transportation director, Wayne Yoshioka, did not return calls for comment about the city's interactions with IMG before publication. (IMG was assisted by the Land Use and Economic Consulting Group of CB Richard Ellis and Rubin.)

A city transit official said Rubin, Steckler, two senior members of the IMG team and three other also met with Honolulu's chief transportation planner, Toru Hamayasu, and others.

Prevedouros said he forwarded some information to Rubin and Steckler, including:

- o A copy of a letter from former Honolulu Council members Charles Djou and Duke Bainum to the Federal Transit Administration that raised concerns about the city's compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act.
- o A link to a [July 2010 article](#) by former Honolulu Star-Advertiser reporter Sean Hao, that detailed the billions of dollars in infrastructure spending Honolulu has planned for the next several decades.
- o Background information about the Honolulu rail plan from a 2007 Federal Register

Prevedouros said Rubin has long been "better than an acquaintance," though not a good friend, so he already knew his position on transit.

"But they came here to just look at the numbers and present the numbers, what the numbers show, and not to have a preconceived notion," Prevedouros said. "We have talked mostly about rail systems on the mainland and rail systems in Greece, not so much in Honolulu. Tom hasn't written about Honolulu. He has bigger fish to fry. But I have no idea what this report contains."

Steckler and others at IMG did not return multiple e-mail and voicemail requests for comment.

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