

Faithful Citizenship



March 30, 2008

The chairman of the House Transportation Committee has been in town for a few days, reviewing local projects in need of federal funding. You can be quite sure that he's been wined and dined by and with the best of Honolulu. He assures us that we are a top priority to receive approx. \$900,000,000 in federal funding towards the \$3.7 BILLION (three more zeroes) mass transit venture we are facing. Let me remind each of us that "federal funds" does not mean free money. "Federal funds" are simply the tax dollars that come from each of our paychecks and get sent to Washington first. It's still OUR money.

This project seems to be the legacy that Mayor Hannemann wants to leave behind when he goes on to bigger and better things. Although it clearly falls into the "Nice to have" category rather than the "Do we need it, can we afford it, and can we maintain it" category that he himself defined when he took office, he seems determined to move ahead. He describes it as offering commuters an "option" for getting to work. Kind of a "Hmmm, today I think I'll take TheBoat, no maybe TheBus, no maybe rail. Ah heck, I'll just drive." thing.

If you noticed this past week, traffic into town was extremely light. Why? The schools, especially UH, were on Spring break. The West Oahu campus of the University system is slowly being developed. When that is finished at Kapolei, it will be very attractive for Leeward students to continue their studies out this way. Administrators as well will be needed. They will be driving Ewa rather than Diamondhead in the morning. We will be saddling our children and grandchildren with years of debt in addition to annual subsidies if rail is built. We must pay attention and ask questions.

Gotta go boot up my hard drive! Aloha - Mary B.