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District 20

Kapolei, Makakilo, and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa, and Waipahu

Aloha e Friends,

GREAT NEWS! (Drum roll, please!) On October 8th, the City will be opening the section of Kapolei Parkway next to the Kapolei Court Complex, connecting Ft. Barrette Ave. and Kamokila Blvd. This will be a huge addition in reducing traffic congestion in the community. On a less positive note, Old Farrington Highway between Kualaka'i Parkway and Old Fort Weaver Road Loop, is closed in both directions beginning Monday, September 29th, for work on the rail project. During the initial part of this 4 month closure, the eastbound lane of Farrington Highway will be open from 5am to 9am, Monday-Friday.

As always, please contact me at 586-6830 or sen-

gabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way.



Sen. Gabbard hosted his September 27th "Listen Story" meeting at Ewa Mahiko District Park Meeting Room

"Listen Story" Meeting - My next "Listen Story" meeting will be held at Kapolei High School teachers' lounge on October 18th from 9am to 10am. If you can't make it, send me an email and I'll forward you the notes.



Industrial Hemp Update

This past session, a bill I introduced, SB 2175, was signed into law as Act 56. This law authorizes the Dean of the UH College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources to establish a two year hemp remediation and biofuel research project. This has started us on the path of growing our own hemp, an incredible crop that is

used in over 27,000 products. What about a cottage industry springing up selling Hawaiian Hemp Seeds, Honolulu Hemp Shampoo, and Hawai'i Island Hemp Oil? We're spending about \$550 million every year importing hemp products primarily from China and Canada. Quite frankly, that's dumb. The latest update on our study is that UH professor, Dr. Harry Ako, has applied with the DEA to import hemp seeds. The seeds will be coming in from Kentucky, which gets them from Italy. The seeds are actually a Chinese variety that were found to grow well in Hawai'i during a previous 1999 hemp study. My daughter, Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, is working with the DEA to get the hemp seeds approved for import as quickly as possible. Dr. Ako will be leading the research with a graduate student on a parcel of land at the UH Extension Site in Waimanalo. Dr. Ako tells us the project should commence very soon.

Roosevelt Avenue Tree Update

Last month, I provided information on the status of 18 Chinese Banyan trees along the western end of Roosevelt Avenue in Kapolei. All of the trees are infested with 4 types of pests (two species of Gall Wasps, Black Thrips, and Lobate Lac Scale). I held a meeting on September 24th with representatives from the Department of Transportation (DOT), Hawai'i Community Development Authority, Outdoor Circle, and the Makakilo-Kapolei-Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board to come up with a plan moving forward. DOT will be removing all the trees in the interest of safety, because as the trees become more diseased, there's a potential for the branches and the trees themselves to fall and impact traffic and potentially cause injuries. DOT will be replanting a fast growing native species called Dwarf White Tecoma.



Take-Aways from Solar Informational Briefing

I co-chaired an informational briefing on the solar interconnection issues at the State Capitol on September 19th. This hearing was a follow-up to an informational briefing last October 14th, which was shortly after HECO's policy change announcement on Sept. 6th that has greatly impacted the ability of folks to get solar PV up on their roofs. While the meeting wasn't a slam dunk success, it was effective in getting HECO to share more information about their plans on how they're going to allow more solar PV onto the grid. ***Here are some of the take-aways from the meeting:***

HECO's action plans that were released on August 26th call for PV customers to pay \$71 a month in fees (right now the minimum fee for PV customers is \$17 a month); but they are also looking to grandfather existing PV customers

PUC is accepting written comments through October 6th on HECO's action plans

A national organization called The Alliance for Solar Choices (made up of PV leasing companies like Sun Run and Solar City) has proposed an alternative to HECO's plans, which they call customer-based solutions, which include maintaining net energy metering (NEM); increasing minimum bill amount; implementing time of use rates; fast tracking PV systems that don't export to the grid; and a move to performance-based incentives for compensating the utilities

HECO says they plan to triple PV from 300 MW to 900 MW and lower overall bills by 20% by 2030

HECO has approved almost all NEM applications received before September 2013

HECO has approved 9,600 NEM applications since September 2013

HECO approved 5,200 applications in 2014

There are approximately 4,500 pending NEM applications waiting for the green light from HECO to proceed

The percentage of customers on each island with solar PV are: Kaua'i (6.1%); O'ahu (11%); Maui, Moloka'i, and Lana'i (9%), and Hawai'i Island (8%)

HECO is looking to raise circuit level limit from 120% to 150% daily minimum load (DML); this will allow another 1,000 customers onto the grid

Testing began on September 22, 2014 at the National Renewable Energy Labs (NREL) in Colorado on a high penetration solar study funded by NREL, HECO, and SolarCity; will be completed by the end of the year

HECO is requiring 200 MW of PV solar systems to retrofit their inverter to improve grid stability; this will take 7-8 months to complete

HECO's energy storage project should be in place by Spring 2017

HECO is looking to make it easier for those PV systems to hook up that don't export power back to the grid



Waipahu Intermediate School Visit
 Senator Gabbard gave 39 students from Waipahu Intermediate School an entertaining primer on how a bill becomes law, during the students' visit to the Capitol on September 15, 2014. Their teacher, Marc Muramoto, coordinated the visit.



Kroc Center Donor Wall Unveiling
 Senator Gabbard attended the on September 10th (L-R: Phil Russell, Kroc Center Hawaii Capital Campaign Steering Committee Member; Don Horner, Kroc Center Hawaii Capital Campaign Steering Committee Chairman and former CEO of First Hawaiian Bank; Bram Begonia, Director of Operations [Kroc Center Hawaii]; Maj. Debbie Lum, Corps Officer [Kroc Center Hawaii]; Sen. Gabbard; and Maj. Phil Lum, Corps Officer/Administrator [Kroc Center Hawaii]).

Quick Announcements...

Kapakahi Adopt-A-Stream
 The city Department of Environmental Services and the state Department of Land and Natural Resources are hosting the Kapakahi Stream cleanup at Pouhala Marsh in Waipahu on October 4th from 8:30am to 1pm. This event is part of the Adopt-A-Stream program for Make-A-Difference month. If you'd like to volunteer, please meet at the Pouhala Marsh, which is located across from the Honolulu Police Training Academy on the right as you come down Waipahu Depot Street. For more information, call 768-3267.



Children and Youth Day—Children and Youth Day will be taking place at the State Capitol on October 5th from 10am to 3pm. This is a free event filled fun and educational activities for the whole family. Parking will be available at all state and county parking lots, and Central Pacific Bank (corner of Alakea Street and King Street). For more information, please call 586-6130 or visit www.hawaiiicyd.org.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH DAY
 Sunday, October 5, 2014 • 10am - 3pm
 At the State Capitol and Surrounding Capital District

DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS FREE EVENT WITH FUN, EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Hawaii children & youth day

Family Caregiver Conference—AARP will be hosting a free family caregiver conference for family and friends assisting older adults who are living at home. The conference will be at the Japanese Cultural Center on October 4th from 8am to 12pm. You can register at <http://aarp.cvent.com/oahucare> or 1-877-926-8300.

Hawaii State Federal Credit Union (HSFCU) Grants for School Supplies—HSFCU is accepting applications up to October 31, 2014 for their Investing in Education Grant Program. This program assists teachers in the Department of Education in getting supplies, books, furniture, electronic equipment, and basic necessities for their classrooms. Grant recipients will be selected based on essay submissions and grant amounts range from \$200 to \$500. For more information, please contact Karen Ho at 447-8084.



Isabelle Cunitz, 11th grade Hawai'i Technology Academy student, was presented with a surprise Honorary Certificate State Legislature by Senator Gabbard at the Waipahu campus on September 22, for being named a National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist.



Koloa Solar Park Blessing

Both my daughter, Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, and I spoke at the blessing for the Koloa Solar project on Kaua'i on September 25th. This is the largest solar farm in the state at 12 MW and includes 45,360 panels built by SolarCity. The \$40 million project is owned by the Kaua'i Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC) and is situated on 67 acres of former sugar cane land owned by Grove Farm. The project will generate 5.5% of the electricity annually used on Kauai – enough to power about 4,000 homes.

The Koloa Solar Project began operation in July 2014 and currently generates electricity at a cost of about 11 cents per kilowatt hour compared to about 24 cents for electricity created by burning oil. This will reduce KIUC's consumption of oil by 1.7 million gallons a year and their carbon dioxide emissions by 18,000 tons per year. During the daylight hours, about 20 percent of the island's electricity comes from the Koloa array. An additional benefit for Kaua'i is that the construction of the array employed about 125 workers.

Makakilo Resident Isabelle Cunitz a National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist

Talk about "shock and awe!" Isabelle Cunitz, an 11th grade Hawai'i Technology Academy student, looked stunned when I appeared out of nowhere at the Waipahu campus and surprised the Makakilo resident with an Honorary Certificate from the State Senate on September 22nd for being named a National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist. Isabelle's parents, Ron Cunitz and Wendy Marx-Cunitz, who also took part in the surprise visit, were beaming with pride from ear to ear.

Isabelle, whose GPA is 4.1, has the formidable goal of becoming a finalist in the 60th annual National Merit Scholarship Program. About 1.4 million juniors in more than 22,000 high schools entered the 2015 competition. Of those students, approximately 16,000 semifinalists were selected. These academically talented high school seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition for some 7,600 National Merit Scholarships worth about \$33 million that will be awarded in February 2015. Of Hawai'i's 63 National Merit Semifinalists this year, just 6 attend public schools, and of those 6, just 2 attend a public charter school.

Besides being a high achiever in academics, Isabelle is in her 4th year of membership in the George B. Carter Serteens Club of Hawai'i, a club dedicated to providing service opportunities and social interaction for gifted teens. She has also been a Girl Scout since first grade. Isabelle was selected for UH-Manoa's College of Engineering High School Internship Program this past summer and has been a volunteer at the Kapolei Public Library and the Summer Fun program in Makakilo.

Bachelor Officers Quarters Project Moving Forward

I was happy to send in testimony in support of Hunt Development Company's proposal to convert the former Bachelor Officers Quarters (BOQ) in Kalaeloa into 100 one bedroom apartments. The Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) board unanimously voted to approve the project at a hearing on September 9th. Currently, the former BOQ has been in disrepair for many years and is a magnet for vandalism and other illegal behavior. By turning this eyesore into apartments for working people at a reasonable cost, Hunt will be providing much needed housing opportunities for our growing Kapolei community. Construction for the apartments, at the corner of Roosevelt Avenue and Hornet Road, will commence this month and be completed by April 2015. Some of the amenities will be a gym, recreation room, and energy efficient appliances.