

TESTIMONY:HR244 See Attached Word Doc

To: Representative Joseph M. Souki, Chair  
Representative Karen Leinani Awana, Vice Chair

Committee on Transportation (TRN)

From: John Bond, Creative Ewa Transit Solutions

Aloha and Thank You for allowing me to submit testimony for HR244.

I believe that having any passenger ferries for the Ewa area are very good ideas and should be encouraged, since the ocean is such a natural transportation medium.

I have personally thought a lot about this idea and have reviewed some past histories where this has been tried on Oahu. I have also consulted with Panos D. Prevedouros, PhD, Professor of Transportation Engineering Department of Civil Engineering, University of Hawaii at Manoa on this very subject.

I believe that the very best creative solution to furthering the goal of providing comfortable, reliable and expedient transportation service from the Ewa area to Honolulu and return is by the following system:

Have two ferry boat/barges able to carry long city stretch buses, so that commuters can just step into a very comfortable, roomy new City bus on the Ewa side- cross the Pearl Harbor channel in just 2-3 minutes- then the buses continue to PH, Hickam, Airport and Downtown locations- and make the reverse trip in the afternoon.

The City is getting new Federal Stimulus money to buy these new buses- so that part is already being paid for. The bus ferry barges would cost about \$1 Million each and would be built in local shipyards, based upon studies already done for this project. Potential landings already exist on each side of the channel, but some further changes would be required to make it very efficient to load and off-load the city buses. These costs could also be paid 100% with Federal funds

There would be few security issues because checks of passengers and the city buses could be made with the same security technologies used at Honolulu Airport and military bases now. Bus passengers would never set foot on military property in this brief transit crossing, so security would not have to be that tight- but it could always be implemented very quickly as needed in an emergency.

US Navy ships would have right-of-way in the Pearl Harbor channel, and the ferry/barges would be operated by the same defense contractor that manages all the water traffic in Pearl Harbor now- so there would be complete coordination with Navy ship movements. No US Navy ship would ever be endangered or delayed. It's the same basic traffic control concept as used at Honolulu International Airport.

There would be no big EIS issues, like the inter-island ferry, because the entire transit process would be within an enclosed inland waterway under complete control of the Federal government. No whales would be harmed in this cross channel operation, or no excessive noise or pollution would be created.

It would be hard to see how the US Navy would object to this kind of transportation plan where they would have total control of the security and safety issues. I really believe that is their main concern, and that they would cooperate, if asked by our congressional representatives, with backing from our governor, mayor and state legislature.

Has anyone ever proposed this to the US Navy? I doubt it. Some history:

This is how, during WW-II, trucks, planes and cargo was taken from the Hickam side, where a road still leads down today to the channel across from Iroquois Point, to the West Loch side. The trip across only took a few minutes connected by a road that still exists today!

Why don't we just do what the Navy Seabees were doing very logically and efficiently in WW-II? They didn't drive the massive amount of wartime supplies all the way around Pearl Harbor- they just ferried it across to West Loch in just a few minutes in 2 ½ ton military trucks.

In the old days, people could cross from Watertown (where PH Shipyard is today) to Pu'u'loa (where Iroquois Point and Ewa Beach are today) by canoe or small barge. The trip in the 1900's from Honolulu to Ewa was much faster than that it is today by driving all the way around Pearl Harbor. Why have we gone so backwards in our transportation thinking? What is the agenda behind making Ewa to Honolulu transit so incredibly expensive when logical thinking already suggests what the right answer is based upon known past history.

Quickly crossing Pearl Harbor in city buses would take a lot of cars off H-1 and have many Ewa commuters riding existing low-cost mass transit. Is this just too cheap and logical for us to do?

1. What is different about this plan from the ideas of running passenger ferry service between Ewa area harbors, marinas or landings?

A. Passenger ferries carry relatively small groups of people on foot. These people, once transferred to another location by ferry still have to make further connections once they arrive at the downtown harbor. This decreases ridership because multiple connections must be arranged and depended on. This has been one of the main disadvantages of TheBoat currently in service by the City and why so many people choose not to ride it. It is inherently unreliable due to weather and sea conditions, and has to make a relatively long trip on the open sea.

However, City buses on special bus ferries carry large loads of people in air conditioned, comfortable seats, from their secure West Loch parking lot, all the way to their actual destinations in PH, Hickam, Airport, Downtown and Waikiki by simply crossing a very short span of inland waterway. It is a complete and totally reliable service. People can get on the

stretch buses- go to sleep, listen to music, read, and then arrive within a short walk from their workplace. This is a superior service over TheBoat or what any walk-on ferry boat can offer.

Unlike TheBus "E" Express service around Pearl Harbor on H-1 now, which makes many stops and takes two hours to get to Waikiki from Ewa, a Bus-Ferry service would put people on the airport side in just a few minutes from Ewa! They could be in Downtown in just another 15 minutes and in Waikiki within 30 minutes. This is a superior service over any other transit plan, including the proposed Rail, because most passengers would not have to make any additional connections to go to major work centers or the University, as the buses would travel through all of these areas- no expensive overhead railways required. All the other infrastructure is ready now!

The proposed Bus Ferry service would also actually service commuters from Kapolei and Waipahu as well- Many commuters from Kapolei and Waipahu would likely want to drive on wide open and nearly traffic free Kapolei Parkway and Fort Weaver Road (going opposite to the morning/evening rush traffic) to the Ewa bus loading location where there would be secure parking areas. This would take large amounts of traffic OFF H-1 in the West Oahu area and also benefit those joining H-1 from H-2, as well as the commuters living in Pearl City and Aiea. Kapolei and Waipahu commuters would SAVE at least an hour by making the Ewa cross channel connection, where their cars would be parked in secure lots and waiting for their short rides back to their homes in Ewa, Kapolei and Waipahu.

2. A draw-back for passenger only ferries: Because they would operate in coastal waters they are subject to:

A. Weather conditions. At any time, service could be cancelled at the last minute- ruining a planned commute and hurting future ridership plans. This is exactly what has largely stifled "TheBoat"- the lack of any real dependability. Morning commuters want 100% dependable service. Off-shore weather can change very quickly.

Buses on ferries are using a totally protected inland waterway which is nearly 100% free of weather conditions. In the very worst situation, the buses can always use the existing H-1 highway around Pearl Harbor anyway- so there is always 100% dependable service.

3. US Navy Objections?

A. The US Navy "may" have already objected to some previous ferry proposal but I don't believe they have considered exactly what the Bus Ferry plan is proposing. It is different from anything anyone has previously proposed before because buses on ferries, are self-contained "cargo packages", not like walking passengers or private cars. Passengers can get hurt, fall overboard. Private cars can stall, hit other cars, causing delay issues. Self contained City bus passengers are entirely safe and secure in their seats in air-conditioned stretch buses.

There are no security risks for the Navy, especially because the defense contractor that already moves all the Pearl Harbor ships around for the US Navy in PH would be the actual operator of

the service. So it would be highly coordinated and secure. This is no doubt the single most important issue for the Navy.

The US Navy has an additional incentive in participating in an effective local transportation system. Department of Defense employees- military and civilian, are paid up to \$230 each, per month, to subsidize transportation to their duty stations on Pearl Harbor, Hickam, etc. from places like Ewa Beach. By moving DoD employees across Pearl Harbor in an expeditious manner would be a major time and cost savings for the Department of Defense and be a significant morale booster because DoD employees will enjoy substantially more time in their homes, with families, rather than in long, horrendous traffic jams on H-1. In fact, DoD employees would enjoy a savings of over 40 hours a week! This is the time they currently spend in bumper to bumper traffic on H-1 now. It's a massive waste of time, money, gasoline and Causes significant air pollution and personal hardship.

4. Is there sufficient depth to operate bus ferry barges in the Pearl Harbor channel?

A. If sufficient depth does not exist today for ferry barges loaded with buses, then just dredging those spots would be the answer. All the dredging equipment needed is already close at hand, which already handles PH dredging support and maintenance.

However, because the Pearl Harbor channel already supports huge Nimitz class aircraft carriers, battleships and heavy cruisers- there should be more than enough draft to support buses on ferry barges.

Ultimately- creating more Pearl Harbor WORK would be very popular I believe- and this would ALL be money spent in Hawaii and much of the services operated and maintained by local UNION labor.

One other point to again make is that the bus ferry barges would be made locally in Hawaii shipyards. There have been previous issues raised about passenger ferries being made in overseas shipyards, which may create other legal or political operational problems. Bus ferry barges would be a 100% locally built and operated transportation service.

John Bond  
CREATIVE THINKING for West Oahu Traffic Solutions

**House Committee on Transportation**  
Wednesday, April 1, 2009 at 8:30 am CR 309  
In Support of HCR 273 and HR 244

Aloha Chair Joe Souki, Vice Chair Karen Awana and members of the Transportation Committee.

I am Flor Martinez, a radio announcer at KNDI radio. I am testifying in support of HCR 273 and HR 244 encouraging the establishment of a ferry system from the Hoakalei resort and marina in Ewa Beach to downtown Honolulu.

Currently, the traffic during the rush hour to and from downtown is horrible and getting worst.

We need alternative routes and modes of transportation to alleviate the rush hour congestion. The ferry system from the Hoakalei resort and marina in Ewa Beach to downtown would be a great transportation alternative.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

## **House Committee on Transportation**

Wednesday, April 1, 2009 at 8:30 am CR 309

In Support of HCR 273 and HR 244

Aloha Chair Joe Souki, Vice Chair Karen Awana and members of the Transportation Committee.

I am Patrick Ko a postal worker with the USPS and a resident on the Leeward side.

I am testifying in support of HCR 273 and HR 244 encouraging the establishment of a ferry system from the Hoakalei resort and marina in Ewa Beach to downtown Honolulu.

Currently, the traffic during the rush hour to and from downtown is very bad and getting worst. I have to wake up early in the morning in order to get to work on time. As I drive my postal truck around, I see all the traffic bottlenecking on a few cluttered roads while few cars are going the other way towards the ocean would be ferry piers.

We need to explore other alternatives and modes of transportation to alleviate the rush hour congestion. The ferry system from the Hoakalei resort and marina in Ewa Beach to downtown would be a great transportation alternative.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.