
HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONDUCT A STUDY ON
THE IMPLEMENTATION AND EXECUTION OF A FLEXIBLE LIGHT RAIL
SYSTEM IN HONOLULU.

1 WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu is preparing to
2 launch the largest and most expensive construction project in
3 state history, a twenty mile elevated rail line that will
4 connect West Oahu with downtown Honolulu and the Ala Moana
5 Center; and

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7 WHEREAS, the purpose of this project is to provide high
8 capacity rapid transit to relieve congestion in the heavily
9 travelled east-west transportation corridor between Kapolei and
10 UH-Manoa; and

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12 WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu has chosen to
13 build an elevated rail system, consisting of steel wheel trains
14 running on steel rails, that will run off electricity, and
15 features trains capable of carrying more than 300 passengers;
16 and

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18 WHEREAS, the cost of building this proposed rail system is
19 estimated to be \$5.4 billion; and

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21 WHEREAS, the City and County of Honolulu plans on paying to
22 build this system through the ½% GET surcharge and moneys from
23 the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts program; and

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25 WHEREAS, tax collections for the rail have not kept pace
26 with projections as evidence by the City and County revising
27 down its projections for FY2010 from \$198 million to \$164
28 million; and

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30 WHEREAS, to ensure the financial viability of its rail
31 plan, the City and County of Honolulu is taking the



1 extraordinary measure of diverting \$305 million in federal
2 dollars meant for its bus system to build its rail system
3 thereby endangering the reliability of the bus; and
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5 WHEREAS, these monetary problems led the Federal Transit
6 Administration (FTA) to note that the rail project's financial
7 plan did not "fare well in the stress test that [the] FTA will
8 apply to evaluate robustness," and if the current plan was used
9 to apply to advance the project into final design, "its
10 weaknesses would likely cause [the] FTA to deny the request";
11 and
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13 WHEREAS, the economic downturn has forced many public and
14 private projects to make adjustments to their projects, yet the
15 City and County of Honolulu has not made any changes; and
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17 WHEREAS, Hawaii's gorgeous environment attracts million of
18 visitors each year, generating revenues on which the State
19 relies heavily as its main industry is tourism and the visitors'
20 enjoyment of the scenery will be severely impacted by an
21 elevated train system that interferes with their views; and
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23 WHEREAS, Honolulu American Institute of Architects (AIA) is
24 a chapter of the AIA and represents and services over 800
25 individual member architects, associates, and allied design
26 profession who are working in fields allied to architecture; and
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28 WHEREAS, Honolulu AIA is advocating for a flexible light
29 rail system, which would allow Honolulu's train to run either at
30 ground level or on elevated tracks, as appropriate; and
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32 WHEREAS, through its research on a flexible light rail
33 system, Hawaii identified a number of advantages of the system
34 that includes the following:
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36 (1) Flexible light rail costs less, saving \$170 million
37 per mile built at street level, and would cost
38 approximately \$1 billion less than the City and County
39 of Honolulu's proposed all elevated rail system; and
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41 (2) Flexible light rail reduces construction time by only
42 taking four to five years to build, much less than the
43 nine to ten years it will take to construct the City
44 and County's elevated train system; and



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(3) Flexible light rail can be built at ground level thereby not blocking mauka/makai views, and allowing easy access for the elderly, handicapped, children, bicycle riders, and passengers with packages or stroller; and

(4) Flexible light rail offers the flexibility of shifting the routes to streets, which are not heavily populated with iwi (Native Hawaiian burials); and

(5) Flexible light rail requires drivers on every train and power sources either overhead wires or in-ground, making it safer for passengers traveling via rail; and

WHEREAS, changes in profile from elevated to at-grade and adjustments to the route will only require six to twelve months; and,

WHEREAS, the money saved from building a flexible rail system could be used to extend the system by an additional 8.8 miles at grade to include UH-Manoa, Waikiki, and West Kapolei; and,

WHEREAS, major metropolitan cities such as Paris, Barcelona, and Portland, have successfully implemented a flexible light rail system that both serves its citizens and preserves the beauty of those cities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2010, the Senate concurring, that the Department of Transportation conduct a study on the implementation and execution of a flexible light rail system in Honolulu; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Transportation submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than 20 days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2011; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to Governor of the State of Hawaii, the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, the

H.C.R. NO. 229

1 Director of the Honolulu Department of Transportation Services
2 and members of the Honolulu City Council.
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OFFERED BY:

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