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## HOUSE 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  
24

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  
40



- 1           (2) Flexible light rail reduces construction time by only  
2           taking four to five years to build, much less than the  
3           nine to ten years it will take to construct the City  
4           and County's elevated train system; and  
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- 6           (3) Flexible light rail can be built at ground level  
7           thereby not blocking mauka/makai views, and allowing  
8           easy access for the elderly, handicapped, children,  
9           bicycle riders, and passengers with packages or  
10          stroller; and  
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- 12          (4) Flexible light rail offers the flexibility of shifting  
13          the routes to streets, which are not heavily populated  
14          with iwi (Native Hawaiian burials); and  
15
- 16          (5) Flexible light rail requires drivers on every train  
17          and power sources either overhead wires or in-ground,  
18          making it safer for passengers traveling via rail; and  
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20           WHEREAS, changes in profile from elevated to at-grade and  
21          adjustments to the route will only require six to twelve months;  
22          and,  
23

24           WHEREAS, the money saved from building a flexible rail  
25          system could be used to extend the system by an additional 8.8  
26          miles at grade to include UH-Manoa, Waikiki, and West Kapolei;  
27          and,  
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29           WHEREAS, major metropolitan cities such as Paris,  
30          Barcelona, and Portland, have successfully implemented a  
31          flexible light rail system that both serves its citizens and  
32          preserves the beauty of those cities; now, therefore,  
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34           BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
35          Twenty-fifth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
36          of 2010, that the Department of Transportation conduct a study  
37          on the implementation and execution of a flexible light rail  
38          system in Honolulu; and  
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40           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of  
41          Transportation submit a report of its findings and

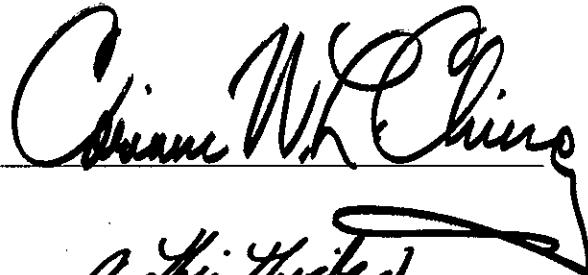




1 recommendations to the Legislature no later than 20 days prior  
2 to the convening of the Regular Session of 2011; and  
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4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
5 Resolution be transmitted to Governor of the State of Hawaii,  
6 the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, the Director of  
7 the Honolulu Department of Transportation Services and members  
8 of the Honolulu City Council.  
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OFFERED BY:

MAR 09 2010

