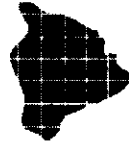




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LATE TESTIMONY

February 25, 2011

Representative Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Chair and Representative Karl Rhoads, Vice Chair
House Committee on Judiciary

Support of HB 261, Relating to Administrative Procedures. (Provides rulemaking authority to semi-autonomous county public transit agencies, thus allowing them to function as semi-autonomous agencies in their respective counties.)

Friday, February 25, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. in CR 325

My name is Dave Arakawa, and I am the Executive Director of the Land Use Research Foundation of Hawaii (LURF), a private, non-profit research and trade association whose members include major Hawaii landowners, developers and a utility company. One of LURF's missions is to advocate for reasonable, rational and equitable land use planning, legislation and regulations that encourage well-planned economic growth and development, while safeguarding Hawaii's significant natural and cultural resources and public health and safety.

HB 261. The purpose of this bill is to provide rulemaking authority to semi-autonomous county public transit agencies, including the agency known as the Honolulu authority for rapid transportation, in order to allow such agencies to function semi-autonomously in their respective counties.

Background. In 2010, voters of the City and County of Honolulu (City) approved an amendment to the City Charter to establish a semi-autonomous county public transit authority charged with the planning, construction, operation, maintenance, expansion, and management of Honolulu's fixed guideway mass transit system, known officially as the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART). This bill proposes to provide HART with rulemaking authority to carry out its mandate efficiently and effectively.

LURF's Position. LURF and its members have been on record since 1992 supporting development of a Honolulu rapid transit project as a needed element of the overall transportation system of the City in order to help alleviate traffic congestion, increase mobility, and decrease dependence on the automobile. LURF has also supported the establishment of a transit authority with the ability to balance pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to transit, and the ability to balance the need for an efficient transit system with the long-term land use plans and policies that will encourage higher densities surrounding transit stations. Transit attracts growth and higher density development. Building the proposed transit system in areas where ridership and density may be considered high by today's standards may only limit growth of ridership in the future.

LURF therefore recognizes and supports the need for a transit authority lead by professionals who view transit as a transportation option as well as a "growth management tool," and the need to provide those professionals with rulemaking authority to enable them to efficiently perform

the planning and management responsibilities, and operational duties with which the authority is charged. LURF understands that HART would manage the rail transit's budget and fares and properly maintain the agency's financial status, as well as work with the City Council and the public with respect to crucial issues such as setting fares and establishing a budget.

Conclusion. Based on the above, LURF **supports HB 261**, which will provide HART with the rule-making authority necessary to function as a semi-autonomous public transit authority which views transit as both a transportation option and as a "growth management tool," and which has the ability to balance the need for an efficient transit system with the long-term land use plans and policies that will encourage higher densities surrounding transit stations.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding this matter.