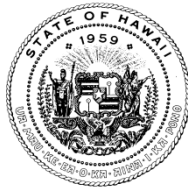


NEIL ABERCROMBIE
GOVERNOR

GLENN OKIMOTO
DIRECTOR



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COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION
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SHAWN SMITH

IN REPLY REFER TO:

February 19, 2013

COMMENTS OF OWEN MIYAMOTO, COMMISSIONER OF TRANSPORTATION ON SENATE BILL 1214 RELATING TO TRANSPORTATION

Honorable David Y. Ige, Chair
Honorable Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

I am in opposition to Senate Bill 1214, Relating to Transportation.

Senate Bill 1214 would abolish the Commission on Transportation. I am one of eight remaining members of the Commission on Transportation, which is authorized a total of eleven members. The Commission serves in an advisory capacity to the Department of Transportation. Without the permission of the DOT to convene, the Commission has not been able to meet since April 2012 and select a Chair and Vice-Chair when members serving those positions completed their terms on July 1, 2012.

The Commission was created by the Hawaii Revised Statutes on July 1, 1961 to replace the Hawaii Aeronautics Commission and the Board of Harbor Commissioners. In its advisory capacity it provides input to the operation and management of the DOT. The members are able to provide useful insight of the public on the programs of DOT that have an important influence on the economic activities of the State. The members possess experience in the private sector business world and are willing to share their time and knowledge to improve the management and operation of DOT.

In his testimony before the Senate Committee on Transportation, the Director of Transportation stated that the Commission is no longer needed and abolishing the Commission would streamline the operation of DOT. Contrary to his statement, abolishing the Commission would reduce transparency of the Department and eliminate the opportunity to provide input by the public on airport, harbor and highway facilities that have a major impact on the State's economy and the movement of people and goods. It was suggested that the Department could not afford the cost of travel for neighbor island commissioners. In fact, Commissioners on the neighbor islands frequently utilize videoconferencing services when their schedule is in conflict with the Commission meetings.

Comments of Owen Miyamoto
Senate Bill 1214
February 19, 2013

In the years that I was employed at the DOT, the commission meetings served as an opportunity to hear from the users of transportation facilities. This was especially true for the neighbor islands, whenever the Commission met on the neighbor islands. Input from that constituency is also available from the Commissioners representing the neighbor islands. It became apparent that there are many issues that need the attention of DOT administrators as revealed in the Senate Investigative Committee hearings during 2010. Allegations of mismanagement in the University of Hawaii facilities office may also be the case in DOT and should be scrutinized closely by independent bodies like the Commission on Transportation. More than just providing advice, the Commission is willing assist the Department in implementing change and should be allowed to continue their voluntary service to the DOT in seeking the most effective and efficient transportation system.

I urge you to table Senate Bill 1214 and request the Department of Transportation to convene the Commission on Transportation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Owen Miyamoto
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