

# Testimony in Support of SB479

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## Senate Committee on Transportation and International Affairs February 4, 2013

By Brian Gibson

The Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization (OahuMPO) is charged with executing a Continuous, Comprehensive, and Coordinated (3-C) transportation planning process for the island of Oahu (23 CFR 450.300). The proper execution of that 3-C process is an important part of the eligibility of local transportation projects for Federal funding. The US Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration can withhold up to 20-percent of Federal funding if they believe the intent of the 3-C process is not being fulfilled. OahuMPO's designated planning area includes all of the island of Oahu, as approved by the Governor on October 29, 1992.

In July 2012, President Obama signed into law a new Federal surface transportation authorization act, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the Twenty-First Century* (MAP-21, P.L. 141-112). One of the new provisions of MAP-21 is the following:

*"...each metropolitan planning organization that serves an area designated as a transportation management area shall consist of...officials of public agencies that administer or operate major modes of transportation in the metropolitan area, including representation by providers of public transportation..."*

A transportation management area is defined as an urban area with a population of 200,000 or more (23 U.S.C. 134 and 23 CFR 450.300). OahuMPO is Federally recognized as serving a transportation management area.

The Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) was created after voters approved a City Charter amendment in November of 2010. It is a semi-autonomous agency responsible for constructing and operating the single largest public transportation project on Oahu.

It seems quite clear that in order for OahuMPO to properly execute a Comprehensive and Coordinated transportation planning process on Oahu, HART must be part of that process. In fact, MAP-21 appears to require HART representation within the MPO. Failure to include HART within the MPO may jeopardize Federal certification of OahuMPO and the Federal transportation funding upon which so many transportation projects depend.

Therefore, I strongly support SB479 and encourage its approval by the Senate.