



# Community Newsletter

FROM THE OFFICE OF REPRESENTATIVE JO JORDAN

HOUSE DISTRICT 45 · WAIANAE, MAKAHA, MAKUA · JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012

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## ALOHA NEIGHBORS,

With the start of the 2012 Legislative Session, I continue to serve as Vice Chair on the House Human Services Committee and as a member on the Finance, Culture & the Arts, Hawaiian Affairs, and Health Committees. In this newsletter, I highlighted some of the information provided



at budget briefings held by the House Finance Committee. In addition to these budget briefings, several subject matter committees conducted informational briefings on issues ranging from education, foreclosures, the Justice Reinvestment in Hawaii initiative, and many other topics. At the same time, I met with a few government officials including representatives from the State Judiciary, Departments of the Attorney General, Human Services, and Labor and Industrial Relations.

I also had the pleasure of spending time with constituents pictured to the right on Opening Day as well as members from the Waianae Coast Chapter of AARP who visited the Capitol on January 12 to advocate for senior health care. On the last page of this newsletter, I included a photo with Fahmi Afandi, a student from Indonesia attending Waianae High School who experienced a day with me at the legislature.

Finally, I am grateful for the many volunteers who assisted with the Puuhulu area Stream Clean Up on December 10, 2011 and January 16, 2012 and am also grateful that Governor Abercrombie released the \$2 million in general obligation bond funds for the planning, design and construction of a flood mitigation project for Lualualei Flats/Puhawai Stream. A few photos are included on page 2 of this newsletter. The next clean up in the Makaha area is scheduled for Saturday, February 18 from 8:00am - 12:00pm. Please contact my office for more information.

It is my honor to continue to serve you. Feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance.

## MAHALO,

Jo JORDAN,  
DISTRICT 45 REPRESENTATIVE

## Opening Day

The 2012 Legislative Session opened on January 18 and I truly appreciate the best wishes offered by many of you, especially those who journeyed to the Capitol including members of Kauhale Lahilahi (The Makaha Clubhouse) and students from Ka Waihona o ka Naauao. Since I was sworn in the day after Opening Day in 2011, this was my first Opening Day as your Representative.

Speaker Calvin Say opened the 2012 legislature with a speech about maintaining stability in respect to the state budget - meaning no new taxes for state government from residents and businesses, and no major general fund appropriation increase for the expansion of state programs. He highlighted the importance of focusing efforts on maintaining economic recovery and promoting immediate job growth by expediting the construction of state projects and avoiding mandates on businesses that increase their costs.

If you're interested in viewing short video clips from Opening Day or reviewing Speaker Say's opening remarks, visit <http://www.hawaiihouseblog.blogspot.com/>.



**Kauhale Lahilahi**

**Ka Waihona o ka Naauao**



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Check out my online newsletter at <http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/memberpage.aspx?member=jordan> or sign up for our electronic newsletter online at <http://eepurl.com/irEqE>. When you fill out the online form, you will be added to my e-mail list and you will get all future newsletters sent straight to your e-mail, not to your mailbox.

Be sure to like my Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/repjordan> for periodic updates.

Thanks for doing your part to save the trees.

# PUUHULU STREAM CLEAN UP

## **\$2 Million Released for Lualualei Flats/ Puhawai Stream Flood Mitigation**

Governor Abercrombie has released \$2 million in general obligation bond funds for the planning, design and construction of a flood mitigation project for Lualualei Flats/Puhawai Stream. Funding for this project was introduced in my capital improvement project request and subsequently included and passed by the Legislature in Act 164, during the 2011 legislative session. The project includes drainage improvements along Puhawai Road in Waianae and involves an intergovernmental working agreement between the State Department of Land and Natural Resources and the City and County of Honolulu. The area called Lualualei Flats is prone to flooding, primarily due to poor drainage infrastructure, lack of stream maintenance, illegal dumping in streams and ditches, illegal grading and filling in of streams or diversion of surface runoff. Improvements will be made to the culverts and other related work.



## **Puuhulu Area Stream Clean Up A Success**

Mahalo to the over 150 volunteers who made the December 10, 2011 and January 16, 2012 Puuhulu area Stream Clean Up a huge success. The clean up focused on removing overgrown shrubs and trees in the stream bed from Puuhulu Bridge on Puuhulu Road to Puhawai Road in order to relieve some of the clogged streams and waterways during the rainy season. The first clean up on December 10 resulted in the removal of 6.32 tons of trash, 1.73 tons of green waste, as well as metal and other waste from the stream. Both clean ups would not have been possible without the combined efforts of community members, organizations, businesses, and federal, state, and city government agencies and officials. We ask the community to continue to be vigilant and report any illegal dumping witnessed in the area. The next clean up in the Makaha area is scheduled for Saturday, February 18 from 8:00am - 12:00pm. Contact my office at 586-8460 for more information.



# HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

## Budget Briefings

After conducting site visits during the interim as reported in last month's community newsletter, the House Finance Committee held budget briefings from January 4 through 20. Each State Department submitted their testimony to the Committee. While the information shared is very detailed, I wanted to highlight some of the information provided.

On January 9, Eugene Tian, Research & Statistics Officer of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism shared information about Hawaii's current economic conditions. He noted that State general fund tax revenues increased 7.8% during the 1st 11 months of 2011, but for the current fiscal year (FY 2012), general fund revenues increased 17.9%. He attributed the increase in general fund revenue to economic growth, tax law change, and the effect of tax refund. He also shared that the visitor industry performed better than expected with a 3.4% increase in visitor arrivals, and 15.1% increase in spending during the first 11 months. He mentioned that passenger count for December increased by 4.4%. Furthermore, he stated that the labor market is improving. Wage and salary job counts increased 1.3% during the 1st 11 months of 2011. Unemployment claims for the whole year of 2011 were 8% lower than those in 2010. Finally, construction activities measured by value of building permit during the 1st 11 months of 2011 was 7.7% behind the 2010 level, additions and alterations grew by 5.0%, many of them are solar-related projects. In summary, Mr. Tian explained that Hawaii's economy is still on the recovery path with the recovery process being slower than expected. Visitor industry performed strong in 2011 despite the earthquake in Japan and the economic uncertainties in the world, and this sector is expected to continue to grow in 2012. The labor market is also expected to continue to improve in 2012. Still, private construction will have another flat year, but government construction will play an important role in the sector. Personal income will continue to grow at a rate slower than the national average. Overall, Hawaii's economic growth will continue to be lagging the nation in 2012, but the unemployment rate will still be better than the nation.



The next day, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR) reported that the state of the economy has not decreased the level of demand for the services provided by DLIR's programs during a time of ongoing fiscal constraints at both the federal and state levels. Still, DLIR reported that it continues to contribute to the ongoing stabilization and recovery of the state's economy. Despite its challenges, during 2011 nearly \$500 million in unemployment benefits were distributed, helping workers to continue "putting food on the table" and ensuring our social safety net. DLIR did note however that ongoing uncertainties and restrictions in the federal labor budget have impeded the ability of the department's programs to plan and operate.

Alapaki Nahalea, Chairman of the Hawaiian Homes Commission testified before the House Finance Committee on January 6 with a refreshing perspective. While many State Departments emphasized the challenges faced by the budget reductions as a result of the economic recession, the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands (DHHL) viewed the current economic and fiscal conditions as a window of opportunity. The Chairman noted that DHHL is committed in its pursuit of energy sustainability for all of its new homestead developments and adopted a formal energy policy that will assist the State in achieving its energy initiatives. In addition, DHHL actively pursued and will be receiving increased federal funding support for its NAHASDA (Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act) program which will address beneficiaries 80% of median income and below. The Chairman also shared that DHHL has successfully partnered with self-help housing and modified self-help housing organizations to meet the housing needs of low to moderate income housing for native Hawaiian families. The Chairman further explained that DHHL is responsible for the management of 203,500 acres of land held in trust for the purposes set forth in the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920. While maintenance has increased in costs, DHHL is supporting and fostering community partnerships as well as leveraging its resources by pursuing joint ventures with other organizations serving native Hawaiians. The Chairman concluded that while there are tremendous challenges ahead, he believes that DHHL is positioned to play an integral part in bridging the State's economic downturn through significant CIP projects.

Testimony submitted by the various State Departments can be viewed on the legislature's website.

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## YOUTH EXCHANGE AND STUDY

### Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program

On January 20, I participated in a one-day internship shadowing program as part of the Youth Exchange and Study (YES) Program, which allowed Fahmi Afandi, a student from Indonesia attending Waianae High School to experience a day with me at the legislature. One of the major goals of the YES program is to provide participants from foreign countries with in-depth experiences in the rule of law and the American governmental system (on Federal and State levels) through both academic and experiential learning duties during the course of the ten-month cultural and educational exchange. The Hawaii International Hospitality Center is overseeing the 7 participants in the YES program who are attending high school and living in the State of Hawaii for the academic year 2011-2012. It was my honor to share not only about Hawaii and our State government, but about our Leeward Coast community and my alma mater, Waianae High with Fahmi.



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