



Legislative Update from...

Senator Mike Gabbard



2013

Aloha friends,

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to you and your ohana! May this season bring you peace and happiness. Our hearts go out to the victims and all their ohana and friends who have been impacted by Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated the Philippines on November 8th. You can send monetary donations to the American Red Cross at 4155 Diamond Head Road, Honolulu, HI. 96816 and the Filipino Community Center at 94-428 Mokuola St. #302, Waipahu, HI 96797. Please let me know if I can ever help you or your family in any way. I can be reached at 586-6830 or sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov.



Mike



COMMITTEE CHAIR

* Energy and Environment

MEMBER

* Judiciary and Labor

* Transportation and International Affairs

* Education

District 20

Kapolei, Makakilo, and portions of Ewa, Kalaeloa, and Waipahu



Listen-Story Meeting

My next "Listen Story" meeting will be held at the Pray Eat Love Café (533 Manawai Street #304, Wai'anae side directly across from Kapolei High School) at 9am on Saturday, December 7th.

Closure of Farrington Highway for Rail Project

It's been on the news, but I wanted to remind you that Farrington Highway closed in both directions from Kualaka'i Parkway to Old Fort Weaver Road Loop on November 25th, and will remain closed until April 2014. So, please adjust your commute plans. The reason for the closure is that Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) will be relocating major utilities and conducting shaft/column work as part of the rail project. The City has adjusted the traffic signal timing at the Farrington Highway and Kualaka'i Parkway to keep things moving at that intersection. If you would like further details about the rail construction work or road closure details, you can contact the HART hotline at 566-2299.



Kapolei Going Green Recycling Event

There will be a Going Green Day recycling event at Kapolei High School on Saturday, December 7th, from 9am to 1pm. Many different items can be recycled, including computers, TVs, batteries, scrap metal, and clothing/household goods. However, they aren't accepting tires, paint, microwave ovens, motor oil, hazardous fluids, cardboard, paper, plastics, wood, and bulky items. They'll also be accepting canned goods to support the Hawai'i Foodbank. For more information, please call Rene Mansho at 291-6151.



On November 13th, Senator Gabbard listened to parents at Mauka Lani Elementary School at the Parent Coffee Hour, an informal session where parents come and ask questions or express concerns to Legislators, regarding the community.

Questions about the PM Contraflow Lane

You may have seen in the news that the state Department of Transportation is reevaluating the PM Contraflow Lane project. This is a key project that would add a contraflow lane in the westbound direction on the H1 from Radford Drive to the H1/H2 split in order to speed up the commute for rush hour drivers who car-pool. I worked with my colleagues at the Legislature to appropriate \$55 million for the project during the 2009 session and an additional \$15 million in the 2013 session. Construction began on the project in June 2012 and was scheduled to be completed by September 2014. Here is the latest information from DOT based on some questions I posed to them about the project.

At the September 25th Makakilo-Kapolei-Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board meeting, the Governor's rep., Mr. Ford Fuchigami, read an email to Board members and the audience stating that DOT was re-evaluating the design of the project, but had every intention of completing it.

It is not our intention to delete the zipper portion from the project. The PM Contraflow work was suspended so we could re-evaluate the feasibility of the PM Contraflow and consider the various reasons whether or not the zipper should be part of the project and develop other options. We continue to meet with Federal Highways Administration to discuss the various options to the PM Contraflow. Those options are still being evaluated. The re-evaluation process is ongoing and that DOT's goal is to get the best bang for the buck while improving traffic flow during peak rush hour. We are still looking for a design of the PM Contraflow which does not significantly impact the eastbound traffic. Even without the contraflow lane, this project will add capacity in both directions. An additional lane will be added from the Aiea Pedestrian overpass to the Pearl City Off ramp, and the viaduct will be widened from the Pearl City on ramp to the Waipahu off ramp to accommodate an additional lane. Also much of the project is to repair the concrete deck of the freeway. The original plan was to repair the 2 innermost lanes eastbound and westbound for the PM Contraflow. However, the project was amended to include 3 additional lanes both eastbound and westbound due to the deteriorated condition.

Has DOT now changed its plans for the PM Contraflow Lane project? And if it has, what will become of the funding that has been appropriated for this important traffic mitigation project?

If the design is changed, again at this point it is still being re-evaluated, and should there be savings, the savings will be reprogrammed for other projects. However, as noted, some of the funding has been used for the additional deck repairs.



Sen. Will Espero, Sen. Gabbard and Sen. Sam Slom joined Senate President Donna Mercado Kim in honoring Veterans on Veterans Day, November 11th by laying a wreath on behalf of the Hawai'i State Senate at the National Cemetary of the Pacific.



Senator Gabbard shared inspiring personal stories with the 107 cadets enrolled in the Hawai'i National Guard Youth Challenge Academy during their visit to the Capitol on November 14th. HYCA's mission is to provide opportunities for at-risk/non-traditional students to learn life skills, to become productive, responsible and successful citizens, while working towards their high school diploma.

Funding Released and New Education Programs at UH West O'ahu

I was happy to receive a letter from Governor Abercrombie on November 19th letting me know that he had released funding for the UH West O'ahu campus. Those projects are:

- Road B – UH West O'ahu to Kualaka'i Parkway \$3.5 million
- Minor Repairs and Improvements \$41,000

Also, beginning Spring 2014, UH West O'ahu will be offering two new programs in education. One of the programs will focus on grades 6-8 and the other one will focus on grades 6-12 in the areas of English and Social Studies.

Waipahu Resident Wins Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowship

Congratulations to Waipahu resident, Miwa Tamanaha, for winning the Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowship from the Toyota and the National Audubon Society! Her yearlong fellowship will include a \$10,000 grant that will help support her work in stewarding native limu. Each year 40 people across the country are awarded this fellowship.



Interim Committee Work Project

On July 25th, Senate President Donna Kim sent all the Chairs of Senate Committees asking that we identify an interim committee work project. As the Chair of the Energy and Environment Committee (ENE), I chose to focus on the problem of invasive species. You might not know this, but in 2003 Act 85 was enacted which stated that the silent invasion of Hawai'i by insects, disease bearing organisms, snakes, weeds, and other pests is the single greatest threat to Hawai'i's economy and natural environment and to the health and lifestyle of Hawai'i's people. For example, a 2010 study by Shwiff et al. found that if brown tree snakes were introduced to Hawai'i, cost to the state in lost tourism, health costs, and damage to the power infrastructure could total \$2.14 billion a year. During the last several months, I've participated in tours led by the managers of the island-based Invasive Species Committees on O'ahu, Big Island, Maui, and Moloka'i (I'm visiting Kaua'i on Dec. 12) to see up close the impact that invasive species are having on our environment. In addition to these site visits, I was also interviewed for TBN's "Joy In Our Town" television show on October 8th. During this 30-minute show, there was a 15-minute segment where I focused on the invasive species issue. The interview was shown 4 times on TBN and is posted on the network's Facebook page. On January 8th, Rep. Lee, Chair of the House Energy and Environmental Protection Committee, and I will be co-hosting an informational briefing on invasive species from 10am to 12pm in Rm. 225 at the State Capitol. Additionally, I'm introducing a bill in 2014 to appropriate \$5,000,000 in General Funds for invasive species prevention, control, outreach, research, and planning for Fiscal Year 2014-2015.

Hawai'i Health System Ranks First in the Nation in Serving Low-Income Residents

According to the Commonwealth Fund Scorecard on State Health Systems Performance for Low-Income Populations 2013, our health care system has been ranked first in the nation in serving low income residents. State health systems across the nation were evaluated based on four system dimensions, including access to affordability; potentially avoidable hospital use; healthy lives; and prevention and treatment. Congratulations to state Department of Human Services Director, Pat McManaman, and her team for receiving this notable distinction.

Live and Let Live – Drive Safe 4 Ewa/Kapolei Kick-Off a Success

I participated in the Live and Let Live – Drive Safe 4 Ewa/Kapolei Kick-Off event at the Kapolei Police Station on November 23rd. Over 100 people from the community participated in this important occasion to highlight the importance of driving safe during the Christmas Holiday season. I presented a certificate from the State Legislature to Ewa Beach resident, Coby Lynn, for his invaluable service to the community and specifically his role in the Drive Safe campaign for many years. I also presented certificates to the winners of the poster contest: Kapolei High junior Catherine Quiba; Waiʻanae High senior Briahana Rivera; and Nanakuli High junior Angelica Blancaflor.



Senator Gabbard honored Ewa Beach resident, Coby Lynn, with a certificate from the State Legislature at the Live and Let Live – Drive Safe 4 Ewa/Kapolei Kick-Off event. Coby was recognized for his invaluable service to the community. Pictured are U.S. Attorney Florence Nakakuni; Eileen Lynn; Coby; Senator Gabbard; and Assistant Police Chief Robert Green.



Senator Gabbard honored the winners of the Live and Let Live – Drive Safe 4 Ewa/Kapolei Poster Contest with certificates from the State Legislature at the Kick-Off event. Pictured are Senator Gabbard; 1st place winner Kapolei High junior Catherine Quiba; 3rd place winner Nanakuli High junior Angelica Blancaflor; and Waiʻanae Military Civilian Advisory Council representative Rocky Naeole.



Senator Mike Gabbard presented an Honorary Certificate from the State Senate to Dr. Pasi Sahlberg on November 14th at UH West Oʻahu. Dr. Sahlberg advises education policy makers around the world and has published over a hundred works on education. He spoke about Finnish education reform and how Hawaiʻi might learn from it.



Merry Christmas ~~
Happy New Year!

Update on Ka Makana Aliʻi Mall

The Hawaiian Homes Commission (HHC) held a special meeting on November 14th to consider extending the option to lease for Hawaiʻi DeBartolo LLC's Ka Makana Aliʻi shopping mall. This project will be located at the corner of Kapolei Parkway and Kualakaʻi Parkway on 67-acres of DHHL land and will be the 3rd largest mall on the island. I submitted testimony which in part said: "...during the last few months, I have received input from both businesses and community members who have concerns about DeBartolo's actions. While I do support this one-year extension, I will withhold my support of the final approval of the lease agreement until I'm assured that DeBartolo has made good on its promises to DHHL beneficiaries and the community. DeBartolo should make a renewed commitment to engaging the community and ensuring that pending issues, such as "community benefits", the Hawaiian Railway Society, and the Kualakaʻi Parkway Extension, are all resolved in a fair and appropriate manner." The HHC voted to approve the extension by a 7-0 vote. DeBartolo is planning to begin construction on the mall in August 2014.