



Legislative Update from

Senator Mike Gabbard

March 2011

CHAIR

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

MEMBER

JUDICIARY AND LABOR ✦ TRANSPORTATION AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

Spring is here and I'll be out in my organic garden pulling weeds and planting seeds every chance I get. Here are a few things I'd like to share with you.

Please contact me if I can help you in any way. My email is sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov and my phone number is 586-6830.

Mike



Listen-Story Meeting

My next "Listen-story" community meeting will be held on March 26th at the Kapolei Starbucks (next to the Chevron Station) from 9:00am to 10:00am.

"Bag It" Screening a Hit

I served as a panelist for a screening of the movie, "Bag It", at the Capitol Auditorium on February 16th. The event was sponsored by the Surfrider Foundation and Sierra Club. Other panelists included Robert Harris of the Sierra Club, Stuart Coleman of the Surfrider Foundation, and Natalie McKinney, program director for plastic-free schools for Kokua Hawaii Foundation.



"Bag it" follows the life of Jeb Berrier as he makes the personal pledge to stop using plastic bags. As we all know, plastic bags are harmful to marine life, create litter, and are harmful to our environment. I congratulate Maui and Kaua'i for taking the step of banning plastic bags. It's incredible to think that Americans go through 100 billion plastic bags each year and here in Hawai'i we go through over 400 million. We also go through approximately 20 million paper bags.

It's time we start using reusable bags instead of plastic and paper. That's why I introduced SB 1363 this time around to charge 25 cents per plastic or paper bag that people use at retail stores. We've got a good shot this time around, because some of the retailers like Safeway and Times are on-board. Also, given our tough budget situation, the state is looking for money. And by our calculations, even with an 80% reduction in the use of these bags, the state still stands to gain \$15.75 million a year from this bill. By the way, SB 1363 would not preempt the bans on Maui and Kaua'i. Cities like Washington D.C. and countries like Ireland have taken this same step and have reduced their plastic bag use. You can learn more about the movie at BagItMovie.com

Walmart to Fix Safety Issue at Kunia Store

At the January 27th Waipahu Neighborhood Board meeting, a Kunia resident reported that a car which was drifting in the upper parking lot of the Kunia Walmart had slammed into the fence of his house. (Drifting refers to a driving technique where the driver intentionally over steers, causing loss of traction in the rear wheels through turns, while maintaining control at a high speed.) He voiced his concern about the safety problem of cars racing up to the upper level parking lot with no speed bumps to deter them.

The next day, we contacted Walmart representatives to see what could be done to fix this problem. I received this email on February 4th from Angie Stoner, the Senior Manager for Public Affairs and Government Relations at Walmart. She informed me that they were fortunately working on a solution:

"Per my previous conversations with your staff, I wanted to follow up with you directly regarding the recent traffic incident at our Kunia Walmart store and the actions we are taking to provide a safe environment for our customers and neighbors.

Starting today we will have an extra Security Car and Guard placed at the top of the back drive during the hours we have the top lot open (4am-12am). This will be an additional guard specifically for this location until we are able to add long-term improvements to our lot. It has been suggested that speed bumps be added to slow traffic in this location. We are currently evaluating the use and cost of speed bumps and have bids out on this work. We will be making a final decision and starting work in the very near future."



Rail Transit Finally Breaks Ground

I participated in the groundbreaking ceremony for Honolulu's rail transit project at a ceremony on Kualaka'i Parkway in Kapolei. This long-awaited project is 44 years in the making, with former Mayor Neal S. Blaisdell being the first to envision a 29-mile rail line from Pearl City to Hawai'i Kai. The 20-mile rail line will connect Kapolei to Ala Moana and is scheduled to be completed by 2019.

We stand to receive \$1.55 billion from the federal government to bring the project to fruition. I support rail transit because it will provide another transportation alternative for our community, will create jobs and stimulate our economy, and will promote smart growth to make our communities more pedestrian friendly. A big mahalo to former Mayor Mufi Hannemann, current Mayor Peter Carlisle, and the City Council for getting this important project to this historic point.

New Hawaiian Home Groundbreaking - February 1, 2011

I was asked to provide remarks at the groundbreaking and blessing of the New Hawaiian Home in Kaimuki on February 1st. The home is a joint venture between DBEDT, BIA-Hawai'i, the Pacific Resource Partnership, and HECO. The house will be a prototype "green" house at an affordable price. Pictured are Councilmember Tulsi Gabbard Tamayo, Councilmember Stanley Chang, Lori Ambrosewicz and Daniel Ambrosewicz (owners of the house), Senator Gabbard, Mike Brant of Gentry Pacific, Senator Pohai Ryan, and Kahu Kelekona Bishaw (Chaplain at Kamehameha Schools).



Kapolei Roadwork Updates

The following state and city roadwork updates were given at the January 26th Makakilo-Kapolei-Honokai Hale Neighborhood Board meeting.

City Transportation Updates

- Kamokila Boulevard Resurfacing – construction to begin in June 2011
- Kapolei Parkway (Kama'aha to Kamokila) – construction to begin May 2012, major drainage structure issues have delayed the project
- Kalaeloa Boulevard (Railroad to Lauwiliwili) – construction began at the end of January 2011
- Manawai/Haumea Traffic Signal (between library and post office) – finished by June 2010
- Kapolei Parkway/Kamokila Traffic Signal – finished by July 2011

State Transportation Updates

- Kapolei Interchange First Phase – completed by June 2011
- Ft. Barrette Widening – start construction at the end of 2013
- Kualaka'i Parkway (Kapolei Parkway to Roosevelt) – DHHL will construct, but no start date yet
- PM Zipper Lane – delayed because of bid protest, will start construction Fall 2011

Update on Drinking Water Quality Study

In my January 2011 newsletter, I informed you about a study by the Environmental Working Group which found that Honolulu had the 2nd highest level of hexavalent chromium of 35 cities tested as part of a drinking water quality study. Hexavalent chromium came to the nation's attention with the movie, *Erin Brockovich*, which detailed the story of a lawsuit that was brought against a water utility in Hinkley, California. This case ended in a \$330 million settlement because of the presence of this very same chemical in their water supply.

On January 5th, Senator Josh Green and I held an informational briefing to hear from the Department of Health and Board of Water Supply on this very serious issue. Since that time, the Board of Water Supply took water samples at 11 pumping stations on Oahu and found hexavalent chromium levels ranging from 0.32 to 4 parts per billion. These levels are well below those found in the Hinkley contamination incident: 1,000 parts per billion. The Department of Health contends that the hexavalent chromium is naturally occurring and is within the 10 parts per billion or less range that is normal.

The Department of Health plans to test all Oahu water pumping stations and those on the Neighbor Islands in the coming year to form a statewide database on this issue.



Cole Academy Coming to Kapolei

Rep. Sharon Har and I presented a certificate from the Hawai'i State Legislature to the founders and owners of the Cole Academy, Gina Mangieri and Doug Ewalt upon the ground breaking and blessing for their new Kapolei location on February 19, 2011.

The Cole Academy, a Hawai'i early education and child development center, already has locations in downtown Honolulu, East Oahu, Kunia, and the Windward side. The objective of The Cole Academy is to educate the whole child while fostering intellectual, creative, social, and physical development, as well as ensuring low teacher-to-child ratios guaranteeing lots of individualized attention and care.

The Cole Academy's newest location will be next to the Kapolei Library, Kapolei Regional Park, Island Pacific Academy, and many existing and upcoming commercial and business facilities. We welcome the Cole Academy with aloha to the Kapolei 'ohana.

Good Advice from an Attorney

I received the following helpful tips in an email from an attorney on how to protect yourself from identity theft, so I thought I'd share it with you. I hope you won't need to use this information!

1. Do not sign the back of your credit cards. Instead, put "Second form of ID required."
2. When you are writing checks to pay on your credit card accounts, DO NOT put the complete account number on the 'For' line. Instead, just put the last four numbers. The credit card company knows the rest of the number, and anyone who might be handling your check as it passes through all the check processing channels won't have access to it.
3. Put your work phone # on your checks instead of your home phone. If you have a PO Box use that instead of your home address. If you do not have a PO Box, use your work address. Never have your SS# printed on your checks. You can add it if it is necessary. But if you have it printed, anyone can get it.
4. Place the contents of your wallet on a photocopy machine. Do both sides of each license, credit card, etc. You will know what you had in your wallet and all of the account numbers and phone numbers to call and cancel. Keep the photocopy in a safe place. I also carry a photocopy of my passport when I travel either here or abroad.
5. We have been told we should cancel our credit cards immediately. But the key is having the toll free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call. Keep those where you can find them.
6. File a police report immediately in the jurisdiction where your credit cards, etc., were stolen. This proves to credit providers you were diligent, and this is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one). But here's what is perhaps most important of all: (I never even thought to do this.)
7. Call the 3 national credit reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and also call the Social Security fraud line number. The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen, and they have to contact you by phone to authorize new credit. Now, here are the numbers you always need to contact about your wallet, if it has been stolen:

- 1.) Equifax: 1-800-525-6285
- 2.) Experian (formerly TRW): 1-888-397-3742
- 3.) Trans Union: 1-800-680 7289
- 4.) Social Security Admin (fraud line): 1-800-269-0271



Senator Mike Gabbard and his colleagues honored the staff and Board of Directors of the Blue Planet Foundation in the Senate Chambers on February 23, 2011. The Blue Planet Foundation is a local, non-profit founded by visionary philanthropist, Henk Rogers. Blue Planet Foundation's lofty mission is to end the use of fossil fuels on earth, starting with Hawai'i.

Pictured (L to R – back row) are Catharine Lo, Matt Matsunaga, Eric Batalon, Dr. Peter Crouch, Becky Dunning, Doug Codiga, Francois Roger, and Ivory McClintock. (L to R – front row) are Stanley Hong, Jeff Mikulina, Governor George Ariyoshi, Senator Gabbard, Henk Rogers, Bob Lloyd, and Mike Champley.



"Listen-Story" meeting at the Kamokila Community Park in Honokai Hale on February 19, 2011.



Jeff McGivern brought his Maryknoll High School freshman morality class to visit the Capitol, attend a hearing on some bills they were tracking, and to have a talk story session with Senator Gabbard, on February 24th. Here they are afterwards, goofing off...