

Legislative Update from...

Senator Mike Gabbard



2013

Dear Friends,

I hope you and your ohana are doing well. The 20th Annual Children and Youth Day will take place at the State Capitol on October 6th from 10am to 3pm. This is a great event for families to enjoy games/rides, entertainment, guided tours, and food/drink vendors. There will be free parking at all nearby state and city parking lots, Central Middle School, and the Alapai Transit Center. For more information, call 586-6130 or visit www.hawaiiicyd.org. Please contact me at 586-6830 or sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov if I can help you or your family in any way.

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

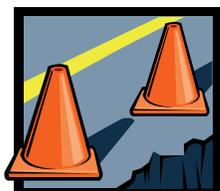
Listen-Story Meeting

My next "Listen-Story" meeting will be held at the Ewa Mahiko District Park meeting room (91-1161 Renton Road) at 9am on Saturday, October 26th.



Farrington Highway Closure

I was happy to see that construction for the rail project was restarted on September 16th. As a result, Farrington Highway from Kualaka'i Parkway to Kahi Mohala was closed on September 16th, so that the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) could relocate a major water line and do column work. I got a lot of feedback from the community on how this greatly increased traffic on the H-1. Councilmember Pine, Rep. Har and I have been working on a solution to this traffic problem. The City has modified the signalization at the Kualaka'i/Farrington intersection to improve traffic flow getting on the H-1. And on October 27th there will be a second left hand lane added to allow drivers to turn left at that intersection to get on the H-1. We got word from HART on September 30th that they reopened one lane of Farrington Highway in the eastbound direction to reduce the traffic. The road will stay open until their column work begins closer to the end of the year.



New Social Security Administration Office Welcome Addition to Kapolei

I presented an honorary certificate from the State Legislature to U.S. Social Security Administration District Manager Samiah Omari and Assistant District Manager Anthony Tarrant at the Grand Opening of the new Social Security office in Kapolei on September 4th. The certificate was also sponsored by Rep. Sharon Har. The office is located at the corner of Manawai and Ala Kahawai Streets, in the heart of our community adjacent to Kapolei Regional Park, the Kapolei Public Library, and next to the Cole Academy. The stand-alone, state-of-the-art facility has 13,500 square feet of interior space and its own parking lot. The building was constructed by the Avalon Development Company and the office is open weekdays from 8:30am to 2:30pm.



HECO Solar Changes

On September 6th, HECO announced it was making changes to its solar PV interconnection process on O'ahu. Up to that point, homeowners had been allowed to get their PV system connected to the grid automatically, if it was 10 kW or smaller (average size is about 5 kW). However, HECO is now requiring homeowners and businesses to contact HECO for approval before they install any sized PV system. HECO contends that they have to do this because the circuits on the grid are filling up with solar and if more PV is added, it could cause grid reliability problems. This is causing big problems for the solar industry: 1) it's causing delays in people being able to get solar because they have to wait for HECO to give them the ok, 2) there are a lot of people who've already got PV on their roofs and are now being denied permission to get connected because of this rule change, and 3) it's causing layoffs and could force companies to go out of business. HECO should have reached out to the solar industry in a more collaborative fashion before making this change and should have considered the potential negative ramifications. We'll hold a hearing at the Capitol soon in the hopes of getting the solar industry and HECO to reach a compromise that's in the best interest of our overall goals of moving to a clean energy economy and lowering our electricity bills.

Announcements for the Ewa Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee

I'll be providing our community with regular updates from the Ewa Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee on ways you and your family can get involved. Here are the latest trainings happening this month:

Red Cross Volunteer Orientation Training – will be held on October 19th and 26th at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Ewa Beach from 9am to 4pm. To register, please contact Kevin Schmidt at 739-8111 or kevin.schmidt@redcross.org.

Community Emergency Response Team Training – will be holding a series of three trainings on October 12th (9am – 4pm), October 19th (9am – 4pm), and October 26th (9am – 2pm). The October 12th and 19th trainings will take place at the Department of Emergency Management (Frank Fasi Municipal Building, 650 S. King Street). The October 26th one will be at the Diamond Head Bunker. To register, contact Jeff Spencer at 723-8960 or jspencer1@honolulu.gov.

For more information, contact Committee member, Rodney Boucher, at 682-0111.

Senator Gabbard and Senator Will Espero presented Don Harlor, Chair of the Ewa Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee, with a certificate from the State Legislature at the Ewa Beach Emergency Preparedness Fair at Ewa Makai Middle School on September 7th.



In light of National GEAR UP Week, the Senate and House Education committees held an informational briefing on September 24th at the Waipahu High School Library. During the briefing, the Senators and Representatives received an overview of the federally-funded program, GEAR UP Hawai'i (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). They also had a chance to receive hear from Waipahu High School GEAR UP and Early College students. Pictured (L to R) are Senator Gabbard, Senator Jill Tokuda, Rep. Roy Takumi, Rep. Henry Aquino, and Rep. Ty Cullen.

Kalaeloa Arson/ White Plains Beach Beautification

I made a presentation at the Kalaeloa Public Safety (KPS) Team meeting on September 19th. KPS brings together law enforcement agencies to work on safety issues in Kalaeloa. You might have heard there's been a rash of arson in Kalaeloa. The Honolulu Fire Department is currently investigating two recent fire incidents. Hunt Development and Carmel Partners have recently increased their private security patrols to deal with the issue. The Hawai'i Community Development Authority, the agency which has jurisdiction over the Kalaeloa community, has started a new working group to address the issue. On a more positive note, at that same meeting Victor Flint of Naval Facilities announced that the Navy is working with Haseko to remove the ugly fencing that juts out into the ocean at White Plains Beach Park.

Molasses Spill

As you most likely know, on September 9th a leaking pipe used to transport molasses onto Matson ships spilled 233,000 gallons of molasses into Honolulu Harbor and Keehi Lagoon. The spill has killed 26,000 fish and a vast stretch of coral. I toured Honolulu Harbor with my colleagues at the Legislature and representatives from the Department of Land and Natural Resources on September 16th to survey the damage. Matson CEO Matt Cox has apologized for the spill and said they will pay for the clean-up without passing the cost on to their customers. Now, information has come out that the Department of Transportation had alerted Matson to the fact that this pipe was leaking molasses going back to 2012. As the Senate's Energy and Environment Chair, I'm working with my colleagues to get some answers and to make sure this doesn't happen again.

Senator Gabbard spoke to the media after getting a tour of Honolulu Harbor on September 16th regarding the environmental damage caused by a molasses spill.



Special Session on Same-Sex Marriage

Governor Abercrombie has called the Legislature back in Special Session on October 28th to consider a bill to establish same-sex marriage. The session will have to be at least 5-days long at a cost of \$26,000 to taxpayers. A draft bill has been circulated by the Governor, but concerns are being raised about the need for greater protections for religious freedom. I opposed calling for a special session, as this issue should have been addressed in our regular session, which begins in mid-January. I'm urging my colleagues to host hearings on the Neighbor Islands to make sure everyone has the opportunity to weigh in on such a critical issue. It's unfair to expect people who live on the Neighbor Islands to pay \$150-200 to fly to Oahu and testify at the public hearings.



Senator Gabbard, Rep. Chris Lee, Rep. Calvin Say, and Rep. Nicole Lowen got a briefing from Genevieve Liang, Vice President for Business Development at Clean Energy Collective, about community solar gardens at the State Capitol on September 11th.



Senator Gabbard gave the opening remarks at the Solar in Hawai'i Luncheon Panel Program at the Plaza Club on September 26th.

Naegleria fowleri Not Likely in Our Water

You might have seen in the news that a brain eating amoeba called *Naegleria fowleri* was discovered in the water supply and killed a four year old boy in St. Bernard Parish, southwest of New Orleans. I contacted Ernie Lau, Executive Director of the Board of Water Supply, to see what they were doing to prevent this from happening here. We were told that they've been monitoring this situation and are confident that *Naegleria fowleri* is not a concern in Board of Water Supply drinking water. According to the Centers for Disease Control, *Naegleria fowleri* is an organism commonly found in warm freshwater lakes, rivers, hot springs and soil. It grows best at higher temperatures up to 115°F (46°C) and can survive for short periods at higher temperatures. It's less likely to be found in the water as temperatures decline. The literature indicates that the organism has been found in groundwater with temperatures ranging from 84 degree Fahrenheit (29 degrees centigrade) to 116 degrees Fahrenheit (47 degrees centigrade). The Board of Water Supply does not use any water from lakes, rivers, streams or hot springs. All of our drinking water is of groundwater origin that has well water temperatures ranging from 68 – 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Our drinking water is also continuously disinfected with chlorine and is served by a closed system. Based on temperature and type of water we use, the risk of *Naegleria fowleri* presence in our water supply is extremely unlikely.

E Ola Pono Ma Kapolei Community Work Day

Kapolei's Drug-Free Hawai'i Coalition, E Ola Pono Ma Kapolei, will have a community work day on October 5th from 9am to 11am. Volunteers will assist in cleaning up trash, pulling weeds, and planting trees at area parks and cultural sites. To participate, be at Kapolei High School at 8:30am that morning. After the clean-up volunteers will be served lunch in the Kapolei High cafeteria. For more information and to sign up, contact Virginia "VJ" Jackson at 484-9787 or eolaponomakapolei@gmail.com.



Senator Russell Ruderman and Senator Gabbard took a tour of strawberry guava bio-control sites organized by the Big Island Invasive Species Council on September 25th. Dr. Tracy Johnson of the US Forest Service explains the bio-control process for slowing the growth of the invasive strawberry guava.



Senator Gabbard, Rep. Chris Lee, and Rep. Cynthia Thielen got a briefing from U.S. Army officials about plans to construct a 52 MW power plant fueled with biofuels at Schofield Barracks. Pictured (L to R) are Senator Gabbard, Rep. Lee, Amanda Simpson (Deputy Executive Director for the Army Energy Initiatives Task Force), Rep. Thielen, Sarah Miller (Booz Allen Hamilton consultant to the Army's Energy Initiatives Task Force), and Howard Killian (Regional Environmental Coordinator for Assistant Secretary of the Army - Installations, Energy, & Environment).



Senator Gabbard, as honorary ringmaster, welcoming the crowd to the Modern American Circus in Kapolei on September 21st. Nice red sequined jacket, Senator. Please don't quit your day job.

