
HOUSE RESOLUTION

URGING THE GOVERNOR TO REESTABLISH AN INTRA-ISLAND FERRY TO
REDUCE TRAFFIC GRIDLOCK BETWEEN THE EWA REGION ALONG THE
LEEWARD COAST OF OAHU AND DOWNTOWN HONOLULU BY 2016.

1 WHEREAS, in the 1970s, the City and County of Honolulu
2 envisioned the creation of a Second City in Kapolei as a second
3 urban core on Oahu to relieve congestion in East Oahu by
4 distributing population growth westward; and

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6 WHEREAS, this long-term land use decision gave rise to
7 major developments on the Ewa plains for commercial, office,
8 residential, and industrial uses for both the government and
9 private sector; and

10
11 WHEREAS, as one of the fastest growing areas of Oahu, the
12 Second City of Kapolei has experienced enormous population
13 growth, from around 43,000 residents in 1990 to approximately
14 102,000 residents in 2010, with the population projected to grow
15 to roughly 159,000 residents by 2025; and

16
17 WHEREAS, the Ewa region is also a dynamically growing area,
18 with thousands of housing units being added to the Ewa plains
19 area over the past several years, and thousands more on the
20 drawing board; and

21
22 WHEREAS, the growth of Kapolei and Ewa is expected to
23 provide more than 67,000 jobs over the next decade and a half,
24 making this area a regional commercial center and attracting
25 customers from all parts of Oahu; and

26
27 WHEREAS, in addition to the increasing number of residents,
28 jobs, and homes, other new developments, including the recently
29 opened University of Hawaii at West Oahu campus, the Kroc
30 Center, Kapolei Commons, and Hoakalei, are anticipated to result
31 in increased vehicular flow between the Ewa region and Honolulu,



1 which will contribute to the traffic congestion already being
2 experienced along these routes; and

3
4 WHEREAS, increased traffic congestion between the Ewa
5 region and Honolulu has already reduced quality time for these
6 residents and their families and has emerged as a disincentive
7 for tourists who have wasted valuable time stuck in traffic; and

8
9 WHEREAS, although residential development and job growth
10 has occurred at a rapid pace decreasing the need for some
11 residents to commute to downtown Honolulu, the Ewa Development
12 Plan of 2011 acknowledges that commuting to downtown Honolulu
13 from the Ewa region remains a problem with the average commute
14 time being at least 75 minutes with 20 percent of commuters
15 spending almost 90 minutes commuting to downtown Honolulu on a
16 regular basis, and commuters have stated that it takes an
17 average of 20 to 25 minutes just to get out of Ewa Beach; and

18
19 WHEREAS, Honolulu ranked as the second-worst city in the
20 nation for traffic congestion behind gridlocked Los Angeles, and
21 drivers in Hawaii's crowded capital city wasted 60 hours on
22 average sitting in traffic in 2013 compared to 50 hours the
23 previous year, according to an annual report on traffic
24 conditions nationwide; and

25
26 WHEREAS, common experience demonstrates that congested
27 conditions exist for the Ewa region because traffic is funneled
28 onto major arterials with insufficient capacity leading from the
29 Ewa marina, up Fort Weaver Road to the H-1 interchange, and from
30 the H-1 interchange to downtown Honolulu; and

31
32 WHEREAS, adopted in 2002, the Ewa Highway Master Plan
33 identified 15 transportation improvement projects to meet
34 expected growth by providing additional mauka-makai and East-
35 West roadway and freeway capacity; and

36
37 WHEREAS, most of the solutions to the problem of traffic
38 congestion in the Ewa region, including the Second City of
39 Kapolei, include the building of more traffic infrastructure
40 such as roadways, demonstrated by the recently completed
41 projects of Kualaka'i Parkway (North-South Road) and Kapolei



1 Parkway, which brought long awaited relief to the severe peak
2 hour congestion on Fort Weaver Road for Ewa Beach, Ewa by Gentry
3 and Ocean Pointe residents; and
4

5 WHEREAS, an additional transportation alternative to
6 alleviate the traffic congestion between the Ewa region of Oahu,
7 including Kapolei, and downtown Honolulu, is the high-speed
8 rapid transit system; and
9

10 WHEREAS, while the high-speed rapid transit system
11 currently being built is expected to have an impact on commute
12 times and traffic congestion from the Ewa region of Oahu to
13 downtown Honolulu, the project is not expected to be completed
14 until 2019, and additional alternative means of transportation
15 should be offered to residents and commuters of the Ewa region;
16 and
17

18 WHEREAS, the Ewa region will experience increased traffic
19 congestion resulting from roadway closures and groundwork during
20 the construction of the high-speed rapid transit system; and
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22 WHEREAS, an unused transportation corridor exists in the
23 waters off the Leeward Coast of Oahu that can be utilized to
24 transport individuals between the Ewa region and downtown
25 Honolulu; and
26

27 WHEREAS, surrounded by the vast Pacific Ocean, Oahu needs
28 to take advantage of these waterways to reestablish the commuter
29 ferry system that once sailed offshore of Oahu in 2000 and 2007;
30 and
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32 WHEREAS, following a pilot project in the 1990s, the
33 benefits of a commuter ferry system between the Ewa region and
34 downtown Honolulu were recognized by the Legislature when Act
35 263, Session Laws of Hawaii 2002, was enacted, authorizing the
36 Department of Transportation to issue special facility revenue
37 bonds not to exceed \$15,000,000 to construct facilities for a
38 ferry service between West and East Oahu; and
39

40 WHEREAS, a ferry system between the Ewa region and downtown
41 Honolulu would not require environmental studies or large



1 infrastructure costs since harbor infrastructure to support a
2 commuter ferry system already exists in the Ewa region, as well
3 as at Honolulu Harbor in downtown Honolulu, and the ferry system
4 would be cheaper and faster to build than any land-based mode of
5 transportation that would require miles of costly construction
6 groundwork; and

7
8 WHEREAS, while a commuter ferry system may provide a
9 tangible benefit to the residents of Oahu, particularly
10 commuters from the Ewa region of Oahu, the tourism industry may
11 also benefit by providing visitors to Oahu with another means of
12 viewing the Leeward Coast of Oahu from the ocean, possibly
13 becoming another tourist attraction; and

14
15 WHEREAS, a commuter ferry system would reduce the volume of
16 cars on the roadways of Oahu, which currently has more than
17 1,000,000 registered cars, trucks, sport utility vehicles, and
18 motorcycles; and

19
20 WHEREAS, while commuter ferry systems have been operated
21 between the Ewa region to downtown Honolulu, in particular,
22 between Iroquois Point and Aloha Tower, and Kalaeloa Harbor and
23 Aloha Tower, these ventures ceased operations for a variety of
24 reasons; and

25
26 WHEREAS, private companies may be interested in
27 collaborating with the State for a public-private partnership
28 that would provide cost savings for the State in reestablishing
29 the commuter ferry system and constructing park-and-ride sites
30 where commuters may park their cars and either walk to or ride a
31 shuttle to the commuter ferry harbor sites; and

32
33 WHEREAS, with proper forethought and planning, a commuter
34 ferry service between the Ewa region and downtown Honolulu could
35 be beneficial to Oahu commuters, particularly those living in
36 the Ewa region; now, therefore,

37
38 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the
39 Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular
40 Session of 2015, that the Governor of the State of Hawaii is
41 urged to reestablish an intra-island ferry to reduce traffic



1 gridlock between the Ewa region along the Leeward Coast of Oahu
2 and downtown Honolulu by 2016; and

3
4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor is requested to
5 prepare a report to the Legislature regarding the intra-island
6 ferry system that includes:

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8 (1) The effect of the intra-island ferry on traffic
9 congestion in the commute between the Ewa region and
10 downtown Honolulu;

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12 (2) The costs associated with the intra-island ferry
13 system, including a cost-benefit analysis of the
14 intra-island ferry system; and

15
16 (3) Any necessary legislation needed to continue the
17 intra-island ferry system; and

18
19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor submit the report,
20 including the Governor's findings and recommendations, to the
21 Legislature no later than 20 days before the convening of the
22 Regular Session of 2022; and

23
24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the intra-island ferry system
25 be reassessed after the completion of the high-speed rapid
26 transit system; and

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28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
29 Resolution be transmitted to the Governor and the Director of
30 Transportation.

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32
33 OFFERED BY:

John M. ...

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