S.B. NO. 3027

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO AN UNDERWATER TUNNEL AND SUPPORTING ROADWAYS TO PROVIDE A MORE DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN EWA AND DOWNTOWN HONOLULU.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature find that the upcoming decades will bring tens of thousands of new homes to the leeward coast and nearby areas of west Oahu. Traffic experts predict that vehicular congestion will double or triple as a result of the growth in population. Completion of Honolulu's rail transit project, potential implementation of toll roads, and other traffic mitigation efforts, while helpful, will not be enough to provide the additional transportation capacity for west Oahu residents.

The legislature further finds that an underwater tunnel constructed at an appropriate location will provide residents of the leeward coast with a much more direct route to downtown Honolulu, which will reduce travel time and save transportation expenses.

The legislature believes that, if invited to participate in the planning, the United States Navy will not oppose the
construction of an underwater tunnel because naval vessels commonly traverse underwater tunnels on the east coast of the United States and throughout the world.

The purpose of this Act is to require the department of transportation to conduct a study on the feasibility of a private-public partnership to design, build, and operate an underwater tunnel for vehicle traffic to provide a more direct connection between Ewa and downtown Honolulu along with the expansion of roadways as necessary to maximize use of the tunnel.

SECTION 2. The department of transportation shall conduct a study on the feasibility of a private-public partnership to design, build, and operate an underwater tunnel for vehicle traffic to provide a more direct connection between Ewa and downtown Honolulu along with the expansion of roadways as necessary to maximize use of the tunnel. The study shall include estimates on the appropriate toll fees for use of the tunnel if a tunnel is feasible. The study shall be submitted to the legislature no later than twenty days prior to the regular session of 2022.
The department of transportation may contract with a private entity to conduct the study.

SECTION 3. The director of finance is authorized to issue general obligation bonds in the sum of $1,500,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary and the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary is appropriated for fiscal year 2020-2021.

SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general obligation bond revenues issued pursuant to section 3 the sum of $1,500,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for a study on the feasibility of a private-public partnership to design, build, and operate an underwater tunnel for vehicle traffic to provide a more direct connection between Ewa and downtown Honolulu along with the expansion of roadways as necessary to maximize use of the tunnel.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of transportation for the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 5. The appropriation made for the capital improvement project authorized by this Act shall not lapse at the end of the fiscal biennium for which the appropriation is made; provided that all moneys from the appropriation unencumbered as of June 30, 2022, shall lapse as of that date.
SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.

INTRODUCED BY: Kurt Fazella
Report Title:
DOT; Pearl Harbor Tunnel; Feasibility Study; Private-Public Partnership; Bond; Appropriation

Description:
Requires the Department of Transportation to conduct a study on the feasibility of a private-public partnership to design, build, and operate an underwater tunnel for vehicle traffic to provide a more direct connection between Ewa and downtown Honolulu along with the expansion of roadways as necessary to maximize use of the tunnel. Authorizes general obligation bonds. Appropriates funds.

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