

CITY CLERK  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

From: ernst [mailto:bternst@hawaii.rr.com]  
Sent: Tuesday, July 29, 2008 9:01 PM  
To:  
Subject: Your Testimony Urgently Needed

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Subject: Executive Matters Committee Testimony

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Dear Committee Chair Ann Kobayashi and members of the City Council:  
July 29, 2008

I believe that the mayor is trying to force the residents of Oahu to agree to build one and only one choice for a rapid transit system. He made up his mind before all of you met to evaluate the alternatives. It appears that he was promised something in return for supporting only steel wheels on steel rail. I grew up in New York City, and rode electric trains with steel wheels on steel rails every day to and from high school. I know how loud steel wheels on steel rails can be. It is a constant noise that raises in volume as the frequency or speed of the trains increases. The tax payers will have to pay for this system and their grandchildren will have to pay for it too. All expenses including personnel, periodic maintenance, utilities, and track and vehicle replacement will have to be subsidized by ongoing future taxes because fares will not cover the actual cost for using the system. These costs will increase over time just as the cost of living increases every year. Actual costs of similar systems in all but one city across the United States have all exceeded planning figures so it is not plausible to think that the cost will not be far greater than the four billion dollars that is estimated for Honolulu's system.

If this system is going to be successful it has to change the current use of the traffic paths that are in use today. A twenty mile system will not do what is necessary. If it is to be built it must go to the East and reach the University campus and it must go from Honolulu to the International Airport. We all know how much better our current roadway system works when the University is closed for holidays. Traffic flows fast enough that a rapid transit system is not necessary.

There are improvements to the current roadways, the Bus system, the sequencing of the traffic signals, creating more efficient exits and entrances to the freeways and to the Interstate highways that could be accomplished with the money being set aside for rapid transit.

I am astonished by the inept management of the University of Hawaii. Why did we pay for fans, girlfriends and children to attend last year's bowl game? The buildings are crumbling, out of date, have inefficient utilities and there is no plan for repair and for replacement nor is the money funded for these repairs and changes.

If the operation of the University is an example of the capabilities of our elected officials then I think that there is little hope that a rapid transit system can be created and paid for during the next twenty years.

I recommend that you place the rapid transit system on the November ballot with a YES or NO vote and a separate vote for the TYPE OF

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TRANSIT SYSTEM. The type of system should include all of the systems that are available. Voters have been exposed to information about each one and have been further influenced by the advertising by the Mayor, City Council and the Trade Unions. The voters should have an input for this all important decision and they have a right to determine where their money will be spent.

Sincerely,  
William Ernst