



Testimony of Move Oahu Forward  
Before the Senate Committee on Transportation & Energy  
and Public Safety and Military  
Wednesday, February 15, 2017 at 1:15 p.m. in Room 225

Move Oahu Forward (MOF) is pleased to provide comments on Senate Bill 1183, SD 1, a compilation of different ideas with the hopeful and ultimate goal of arriving at a steady funding source for the Honolulu rail project that will allow for the completion of a 20-mile, 21 station system, as envisioned in the Full Funding Grant Agreement between the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the City and County of Honolulu.

We understand it is early in the legislative process of briefings, hearings and negotiations. As such, we will not in this writing comment specifically on the merits of the individual parts. That said, extending the ½% of general excise tax (GET) would be the cleanest and steadiest revenue source for the rail project. It is already in place and would not require legislators to find other monies, important and needed for other priorities.

Taken together, SB 1183, SD1 can appear confusing and conflicting; however, read as 4 separate parts, each with positives and negatives, provides members with an opportunity to consider and garner the best options to move the measure forward. It could include other beneficiaries such as the Hawaii Department of Transportation for their road priorities, should the Legislature in its wisdom, decide to pursue this avenue and allowing all counties to benefit. As the process moves on, as with any partnership, there may be other opportunities and obligations.

The Federal Transit Administration continues to monitor Honolulu, both the ongoing construction work and the progress at the Legislature. The Full Funding Grant Agreement is an enforceable contract between the federal government and the City. Because HART is in a recovery stage, remaining federal monies are being held until parties can come to terms and agree on a workable plan moving forward. This is no different from what many other cities have experienced and worked thru for the benefit of their citizens. The most recent include Seattle and Los Angeles.

What does make it different is that we are between Administrations. As we all know, there are many changes afoot in Washington, D.C . Hence, we must be very careful about taking any action to alter the Full Funding Grant Agreement at this time which could change the responsibilities and obligations of the parties.

Enhanced mobility, equity for those in West Oahu, quick commutes to and from the airport from urban Honolulu, and between the UH campuses are important goals to strive for as we work together for a livable, accessible city we can all be proud of.

We thank you for your continued leadership.