



**Testimony of Move Oahu Forward
Before the House Committee on Transportation
Wednesday, March 22, 2017 at 9:30 am in Room 423**

Move Oahu Forward (MOF) is pleased to provide comments on Senate Bill 1183, SD 2, as the remaining legislative vehicle which will allow for continued discussion of options with the ultimate goal of arriving at a steady funding source to 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.

Many ideas have been proposed; some more favorable to the Honolulu rail project than others. 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. In this regard Mr. Chairman, your bill, HB 349 is an optimum measure should you and your committee, upon further deliberation, decide to move BH 349 forward instead of SB 1183, SD2. It provides HART what it needs, as well as provides the Department of Transportation with a funding source to match the federal highway funds to invest in roads on the Neighbor Islands and Oahu.

The Federal Transit Administration continues to monitor Honolulu, both the on-going construction work and the progress at the Legislature. The Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) 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 is different is the position the Trump Administration has taken. In their FY2018 budget topline relating to the Federal Transit Administration, they have stated their intent to limit funding to only those New Starts projects with an approved FFGA. This means that any material change in the Honolulu FFGA (like stopping at Middle Street or Aloha

Tower) would reopen the agreement and put Hawaii's federal funds at risk. Any change or negotiation, such as what the Obama Administration suggested with a "Plan B," or hitting the pause button, could very well jeopardize the federal funding that is in escrow, and in a worst case scenario, call for the return of those federal monies already expended.

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.