



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Education
February 9, 2007

By
John Morton
Interim Vice President for Community Colleges

SB 21 Relating to Leeward Community College

Chair Sakamoto, Vice Chair Tokuda, and Members of the Committee:

Leeward Community College supports the intent of SB 21 provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR Approved Executive Biennium Budget. This measure would appropriate funding for the planning, design and construction of a second access road to the Leeward Community College campus and surrounding residential neighborhoods.

The Second Access Road project at Leeward CC is part of the campus' Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). This specific project was identified in the initial 1966 Master Plan for the College and was recommended to be completed prior to 1971 when the campus became fully operational. In 1974, DAGS completed construction plans and an Environmental Impact Statement for this project. Subsequently, CIP funds were awarded to the Department of Transportation in 2002 by the State Legislature with construction slated to begin in 2004, but the project never materialized. It has been 40 years since this project was identified as a critical need for the campus and yet the project has yet to be completed.

The same concerns and issues that have been continuously raised since the identification of this project still exist but have only been further exacerbated (i.e. traffic congestion, pedestrian and bicycle health and safety, lack of emergency evacuation egress points, deteriorating conditions of existing roadways). The viewpoint held by many is that it is only a matter of time when a tragic natural or man-made incident will occur that will severely affect Leeward Community College's students, faculty, and staff and surrounding neighborhood residents. Two recent incidents bring this further into focus. For instance had the military truck hit the overpass that serves the Leeward campus, thousands of students, staff, and neighborhood residents would have been effectively stranded on campus and the area would be inaccessible. Also a few weeks ago, the campus had a natural gas leak incident that required a partial evacuation of campus. Luckily, this incident occurred in the late afternoon when most classes had concluded for the day and the evacuation proceeded relatively smoothly. But had this happened during the morning or early afternoon or had the emergency been more

profound, then the safe evacuation of the campus and adjoining residential neighborhood may well have been compromised.

Adding further justification to the need of a second access road is related to the proposed mass transit system. Leeward CC is projected to be the site of a transit stop. A second access road would be critical to meet the pedestrian and vehicular traffic needs of the area. The second access roadway would also provide for increased recreational opportunities as additional access points to the Pearl Harbor Historic Trail corridor may be possible...which would become a much more visible community asset to Oahu residents and visitors.

Presently a consultant hired by the State DOT is in the final stages of the alternative roadway analysis for a second access road. The preliminary alternative analysis is scheduled to be completed by February 2007.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.