

Your legislative update from...

Waialeale, Village Park, Royal Kunia, Makakilo, Kapolei, Kalaeloa, Honokai Hale, and portions of Ko 'Olina & Waipahu



Mike

Gabbard

State Senator, 19th District



Hawaii State Senate
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Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! I invite you to join me for lunch on the Opening Day of the 2009 Legislative Session at the State Capitol from 12pm to 2pm on Wednesday, January 21st in Room 201. Here are a few things I'd like to share with you.

Mike



40th Wedding Anniversary

I'm blessed to have celebrated my 40th wedding anniversary with the most wonderful woman in the world on December 27th.

Carol and I met while working summer jobs at Yosemite National Park in 1967. We've had a very fulfilling life together, raising 5 children and now doting on our 6 grandchildren, who unfortunately are spread all over the world.



The Gabbards celebrate 40 years together with youngest daughter Davan.

Power Outage Info Briefing

My committee, Senate Energy and Environment, held an informational briefing in conjunction with Senator Roz Baker of the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee, on January 14th. The purpose of the briefing was to investigate the causes of the December 26th power outage that left the entire island of Oahu without power. The briefing focused on finding out the reasons for the delay in restoring the power and possible solutions.

We heard presentations from the Hawaii Restaurant Association, Hawaii Food Industry Association, and the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii and learned how the power outage impacted their member businesses. Some of them lost tens of thousands of dollars in damaged merchandise, in addition to lost business because they couldn't stay open without electricity. The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and the Consumer Advocate spoke about their responsibilities in regulating HECO and protecting the public's interest.



Listen-Story

My next Listen-Story meeting will be held at the Kapolei Starbucks (next to Chevron Station) on Saturday, February 14th at 9:00am.

Please contact me if I can help you in any way. My phone number is 586-6830 and my email is sengabbard@capitol.hawaii.gov.

HECO gave an in-depth overview of their preliminary findings from their internal investigation into the power outage. Members of the public were also able to submit written questions. We're going to continue seeking answers and following the PUC's own investigation into the power outage in our efforts to represent the community. We're hopeful that HECO will take our concerns to heart and do all they can to improve our electrical system infrastructure. I'll be looking at possible solutions to better protect the public from having to bear the future cost of these outages.

Focus on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction

I co-chaired an informational briefing with Rep. Hermina Morita, Chair of the House Energy and Environmental Protection Committee, on January 15th. This hearing allowed us to get an update from Dr. Larry Lau of the Department of Health and Dr. Makena Coffman of UH on the progress of the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reductions Task Force. If you're not familiar, the task force was created by Act 234 in 2007 to prepare a work plan and regulatory scheme to lower the statewide greenhouse gas emissions levels to or below 1990 levels by January 1, 2020.

We had a presentation from Dr. Chip Fletcher from UH about the possible future impacts in Hawaii of rising sea levels caused by increased greenhouse gases. Dr. Denise Konan also shared with us her thoughts on the potential economic impact of climate change.



Makakilo Elementary students and staff visited Sen. Gabbard at the State Capitol on December 15, 2008.



Matthew Hall (Aloha Section PGA President), Sen. Gabbard, and Jim Haugh (Aloha Section PGA CEO) at the 2008 Hawaii'i Golf Industry Conference on December 9th.

Senate Going Paperless

One of the good things about the upcoming legislative session is the fact that we will be moving forward with our "paperless initiative." Last year, we initiated our plan to improve the public's access to the legislative process and to limit the number of paper documents generated by the Senate and the community.

Just to give you an idea of the progress we've made, in 2007 we printed 9,798,456 pages but reduced that down to 6,707,084 in 2008. That's a 60% reduction!



"Old Tires" Can Cause Big Problems

A few months back a friend of mine sent me a link to an ABC 20/20 report that aired in May 2008. The report focused on ABC's alarming investigation which discovered that some tire dealers were selling unused tires that were 4 to 14 years old. This practice has led to tire failure and fatal accidents.

In response to this problem, I plan to introduce a bill which would prohibit the sale of any new and unused tire that is older than 6 years old from the manufacturing date. This is a practical solution that won't cost the state big money, but will save lives.



December 26, 2008

Sen. Gabbard checking out the progress of the Kamokila Extension, a small road near the new Costco and Judiciary Complex in Kapolei that will soon connect Kamokila Blvd to Roosevelt.

Renewable Energy on the Neighbor Islands



In late December and early January, I had the opportunity to visit Kaua'i, Big Island, Moloka'i, and Lana'i. Each of these visits allowed me to learn more about some exciting renewable energy projects that are underway.

I first visited Kauai and met with officials from the Kauai Island Utility Cooperative (KIUC), which supplies electricity to that island. I also stopped in to see Mayor Bernard Carvalho. Both the KIUC and Mayor Carvalho are working to increase renewable energy on Kauai.

I then visited the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority (NELHA) in Kona. NELHA was created by the Legislature in 1974 to serve as a support facility for research that was being done on ocean thermal energy conversion (OTEC). In 1979, this research proved to be successful when the OTEC project became the first one in the world to produce net electricity.

Since that time, NELHA has become a landlord for many businesses, including those specializing in deep-sea water production, aquaculture, and renewable energy. During our tour, we were able to check out Cellana LLC's efforts to create biofuels from algae and SolFocus' solar concentrator experiments.

I next visited the friendly island of Moloka'i, where I was able to see the future sites of First Wind's planned Ikaika I (50 MW) and Ikaika II (350 MW) wind farms that are expected to come online in the next few years.

First Wind owns and operates the 30-megawatt Kaheawa wind farm on Maui. They have been working closely with organizations, such as the Moloka'i Community Services Center, over the last two years to ensure that their projects are done in a culturally sensitive and environmentally conscious way.

I also took part in the blessing ceremony for Castle & Cooke's 1.2 MW La Ola Solar Farm on January 6th in Lana'i. This is an impressive project that includes more than 7,400 photovoltaic panels constructed on 10 acres of land. According to the company, this project will cut oil imports by 5,000 barrels annually. I also visited the proposed site of a 400 MW wind farm on the northwest coast.

As the Chair of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee, I'll do my best this session to support and encourage these types of alternative energy projects with the goal of steering us away from our dependence on foreign oil.



Rep. Evans, Sen. Gabbard, Rep. Coffman, Cellana CEO Gabriel Scheemaker.



Sen. Gabbard & Karen Holt, Moloka'i Community Services Center Exec Director.



Sen. Gabbard, Henk Rogers (Founder, Blue Planet Foundation), Sen. English at a future wind farm site on Lana'i.

New Diesel Repair Business at Campbell Industrial Park



It was an honor to attend the blessing for Austin Eguire's new business, Hawai'i On-Site Diesel Repair, LLC, at Campbell Industrial Park on December 3rd. Austin is a Kapolei resident, an active parishioner of St. Jude Catholic Church, and a member of the Kapolei City Lions Club.

He was raised in Palolo Valley and worked for Oahu Transit Services as a heavy equipment mechanic but longed to be his own boss and start a company. In 2005, Austin made his dream a reality by sacrificing and pushing himself much harder than most people would be able to handle.

Through 6 home/business relocations and despite many personal and occupational challenges, the Eguire ohana has put their all—including lots of blood, sweat, and tears—into making Hawai'i On-Site Diesel Repair a success. I welcome their business to our community and wish them success and happiness. Also pictured are Austin's wife Emmly, their son Bronson, and Rev. Cletus Mooya.

9th Annual Pilikoko Baseball Clinic a Success



I enjoyed lending a hand with the 9th Annual Pilikoko Baseball Clinic on January 4th. The one-day clinic was held at

Kapolei High School at no cost to the over 200 youth participants aged 5 to 17 years old. Kapolei resident Les Akeo (center in photo at right with his dad, Les "Pops" Akeo Sr., and Sen. Gabbard) coordinates the clinic with his nephews, the Sardinha Brothers.



Les set innumerable records in his younger days as an NAIA All-American baseball player. Today, his focus is on helping collegiate athletes as Hawai'i Pacific University's assistant baseball coach, but he also finds time to work with keiki who have their own dreams to make baseball history.



The Sardinha Brothers baseball legacy begins with oldest son Dane Sardinha, who played for Kamehameha Schools, then Pepperdine University, and is now a Major League Baseball catcher for the Detroit Tigers. Second son Bronson Sardinha, who was drafted right out of high school, has played professional baseball with the New York Yankees, the Seattle Mariners, and the Cleveland Indians. Duke Sardinha, the youngest of the 3 and also a former Kamehameha Warriors baseball star, is now a third baseman for the Colorado Rockies.

Mahalo to Jon Faurot for bringing this great event to Kapolei. I wish him, Les Akeo, and the Sardinha Brothers many more successful baseball clinics in our community.

Senator Mike Gabbard