

NEWS RELEASE – HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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HOUSE APPROVES 2014-15 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

First-term representatives roll up sleeves in legislative budget process

Honolulu, Hawaii – Even as the House Finance Committee, Chair Sylvia Luke (Makiki, Punchbowl, Nuuanu, Dowsett Highlands, Pacific Heights, Pauoa), was putting the finishing touches on the draft supplemental budget the state Council on Revenues announced its latest quarterly projections, which again lowered the rate of growth for the State downward to zero for fiscal year 2014 and 5.5 percent for fiscal year 2015.

For three first-term representatives, the experience showed them how precarious the process of building a state budget can be, especially when based on expectations that literally become moving targets.

The House of Representatives on Wednesday approved <u>HB1700 HD1</u>, which appropriates funds for operating and capital improvement costs of the Executive Branch for the supplemental year FY2014-2015, including operating monies of \$6.253 billion in general funds and \$12.148 billion in all means of financing. The measure now goes to the Senate for its consideration.

Two of the representatives, while in their first term in the House, are far from novices in the public service arena. In fact, one, Representative Bertrand Kobayashi (Waialae, Kahala, Diamond Head, Kaimuki, Kapahulu) is a veteran lawmaker, who previously served in both the Senate and House. Representative Gregg Takayama (Pearl City, Waimalu, Pacific Palisades) is a veteran journalist and communications specialist who worked for the late Senator Dan Inouye and then Lt. Gov. Ben Cayetano. Of the three, Representative Takashi Ohno (Nuuanu, Liliha, Alewa Heights, Puunui) is the only "true" freshman.

"This budgeting process under Finance Chair Luke was very illuminating and refreshing," said Kobayashi, who as a member of the Finance Committee had a front row seat. "It has evolved and changed since I was last in the House and certainly under this Chair's leadership. I found it more

inclusive and collaborative, and consequently much more transparent, and that's been a good thing for the process, for all of us in the House and for the general public."

For Representative Takayama, who is also a member of the Finance Committee and the public safety point person for the committee, the budget process was also instructive and gratifying. On the House floor, he noted the proposed funding in the budget would advance public safety in several significant ways.

"This budget appropriates \$5M to the state Department of Public Safety to begin planning and site selection for the relocation of the Oahu Community Correctional Center (OCCC) and expansion of our prison capacity to accommodate the return of the 15-hundred inmates now housed on the Mainland." Takayama said.

"In addition, this measure would appropriate \$1.5M for planning and design of a new Maui Community Correctional Center. The replacement of OCCC and construction of a new Maui jail were identified by the Director of Public Safety as the two top priorities of our State's correctional system, during a legislative briefing last month."

Representative Ohno, who is vice chair of the House Education Committee and a former elementary school teacher, pointed to appropriations supporting education.

"I'm proud of this budget that is focused on putting students first," Ohno said. "We've invested additional resources into early education classrooms and the Weighted Student Formula to support our teachers and students. In addition, we've provided funding to restore and lengthen service hours at public libraries on the Neighbor Islands. This budget works to ensure that Hawaii students have the foundation and funding for the high quality education system they deserve."

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