

MAR 07 2025

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY SEAN P.
DUFFY TO INITIATE A PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF THE HONOLULU RAIL
TRANSIT PROJECT.

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2 WHEREAS, the Rail Project is the most expensive publicly
3 funded project in the State of Hawaii, and due to its use of
4 city, state and federal funding it is the Senate's belief that a
5 performance review under the 2024 Amended Full Funding Grant
6 Agreement ("Amended FFGA") to determine whether satisfactory
7 progress is being made to complete the Rail Project should be
8 initiated by the United States Transportation Secretary Sean P.
9 Duffy and the FTA; and

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11 WHEREAS, Sections 17-101 and 17-103.1 of the Revised
12 Charter of Honolulu 1973 (Amended 2017 Edition) establish the
13 Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation ("HART"), which has
14 the authority to develop the City's fixed guideway system, known
15 as the Honolulu Rail Transit Project ("Rail Project" or
16 "Project"); and

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18 WHEREAS, ballot measures in 2008 and 2010 presented to and
19 approved by the fully registered voters of the City and County
20 of Honolulu ("City") approved the establishment of a public
21 transit authority (now known as "HART") with the responsibility
22 to establish the rail transit system; and

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24 WHEREAS, on February 22, 2011, the City broke ground in
25 East Kapolei near the site of the 1st of 21 stations for the 20-
26 mile rail route with an expected price of \$5.5 billion; and

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28 WHEREAS, in 2012, the City and the Federal Transit
29 Administration ("FTA") entered into a Full Funding Grant
30 Agreement for the Rail Project providing federal grant funding
31 to the City in the amount of \$1.55 billion, with the City
32 pledging to complete the system for public use by 2020 at a
33 total cost of \$5.2 billion; and
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1 WHEREAS, since breaking ground in 2011, the embattled Rail
2 Project has faced massive cost overruns, huge delays, and
3 multiple lawsuits which put the current timeline for finishing
4 the Project in 2030, with an estimated cost of \$12.45 billion;
5 and

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7 WHEREAS, the State of Hawaii has twice now passed
8 legislation to bailout the plagued Rail Project by providing
9 additional funding of \$1.5 billion in 2015 and \$2.4 billion in
10 2017 through a general excise tax surcharge that is set to
11 expire in 2030; and

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13 WHEREAS, in 2019 the Honolulu City Council approved
14 Resolution 19-29, FD2 which supported the Office of the City
15 Auditor initiating an independent forensic audit of HART, but
16 plans were set aside in 2020 due to the global pandemic; and

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18 WHEREAS, in 2024 the City and the FTA signed an Amended
19 FFGA with a stated purpose that included defining milestones of
20 when the federal government would release remaining funds and
21 facilitating a timely and efficient management of the Rail
22 Project; and

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24 WHEREAS, Sections 15 and 19 of the Amended FFGA provide for
25 Project Management Oversight through Hill International Inc., a
26 consultant that monitors the rail project for the FTA, and
27 governmental authority to review HART's performance and
28 determine whether satisfactory progress is being made to
29 complete the rail project; and

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31 WHEREAS, as late as 2024 it was reported that Hill
32 International Inc. repeatedly flagged the Rail Project for
33 problems it faced filling vacancies in critical positions; and

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35 WHEREAS, to date, HART has received just over \$1.1 billion
36 in federal funding with another \$364 million expected as more
37 Project milestones are met; and

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39 WHEREAS, on February 20, 2025, the United States
40 Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy announced that the
41 Federal Railroad Administration initiated a compliance review of
42 the federal grants for the battered California High-Speed Rail



1 Project which faces significant funding shortfalls and extreme
2 delays similar to the Honolulu Rail Project; now, therefore,

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4 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
5 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2025,
6 respectfully requests the United States Secretary Sean P. Duffy
7 and the FTA initiate a performance review under the Amended FFGA
8 to determine whether satisfactory progress is being made to
9 complete the Rail Project; and

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
12 Resolution be transmitted to United States Secretary of
13 Transportation Sean P. Duffy, the Federal Transit
14 Administration, Hill International Inc., consultant and Project
15 Management Oversight for the Rail Project, and the Executive
16 Director and Chair of the Board of the Honolulu Authority for
17 Rapid Transit.

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20 OFFERED BY: 

