

CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
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March 31, 2009

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CITY COUNCIL
HONOLULU, HAWAII

Memorandum

TO: Councilmember Todd Apo, Chair

CC: Clayton Wong

FROM: Councilmember Romy M. Cachola 

SUBJECT: National Association of Counties (NACo)
2009 Legislative Conference
Washington, DC
March 7-11, 2009

I attended the National Association of Counties (NACo) 2009 Legislative Conference, which was held in Washington, DC from March 7-11, 2009. The conference provided county officials with the opportunity to hear speakers, discuss legislation, and network with other officials to exchange information on various issues.

The main themes of the conference were the economy and the recently-enacted economic stimulus package. While other a range of issues were presented and discussed, many speakers talked about the stimulus package, the challenges that the Obama administration faced to get the stimulus package implemented, the money flowing and the jobs created.

County priority provisions contained in the stimulus package included \$1 billion for the Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), \$2 billion for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP), \$2.25 billion for HOME Investment Partnerships, \$2.8 billion for Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) and other programs.

However, because I am a member of NACo's Transportation Steering Committee, I focused primarily on transportation-related issues.

Saturday, March 7, 2009

On day one of the conference, I attended the Highway-Highway Safety Subcommittee meeting from 12 noon to 1 pm, the Mass Transit-Railroad Subcommittee meeting from 1 pm to 2 pm and the Airports Subcommittee meeting from 2 pm to 3 pm. The subcommittees provide an opportunity to discuss issues in an informal setting. New NACo policy is often first considered at these meetings.

Sunday, March 8, 2009

I attended the full NACo Transportation Steering Committee meeting from 9 am to 12 noon. After opening remarks by Chairman Scott Haggerty, the audience heard several presentations, the most informative of which was by Jim Kolb, Staff Director of the House Highways & Transit Subcommittee, and Harlan Miller, Acting Director of the Office of Planning, Federal Highway Administration on Implementation of Stimulus Legislation.

During the meeting, there were reports from the four subcommittees (Highway-Highway Safety; Mass Transit-Railroad; Airports; and Ports), a legislative update and a discussion of several proposed new legislation. For consideration were: a resolution for Transportation Trust Funds; a resolution on the Rule Making Establishing Minimum Levels of Retroreflectivity for Sign Faces Pavement Markings; a resolution on Air Quality-Ocean Going Marine Vessel Emissions; and a resolution to Access Federal GSA Schedules for the Purchase of Environmentally Preferable "Green" Commodities and Services.

Monday, March 9, 2009

Much of the focus of the day's speakers and educational sessions seemed to center around the implementation of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (the federal stimulus legislation) and NACo's "Restore the Partnership" campaign, which is aimed at re-establishing a working partnership between the federal government and county government.

At 9 am, I attended the Educational Session Block I discussion entitled "The Race Is On: The Surface Transportation Bill in the New Congress." This discussion was moderated by Scott Haggerty, chair of NACo's Transportation Steering Committee. The speakers included Susan Binder, Senior Policy Advisor for the Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works, and Jim Kolb, Staff Director of the House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.

The speakers explained that SAFETEA-LU, the federal government's highway and transit program, will be expiring in 2009. Consequently, there is a genuine interest in reforming federal programs to address the concerns of owners of transportation systems, which includes county governments, which own 1.8 million miles of roads, 256,000 bridges and one-third of the nation's transit systems.

Key issues of concern for counties in the surface transportation reauthorization include the adequacy of current funding in face of the substantial needs of the system; adequacy of the fuel tax as a future spending source; more funding for county-owned highways, bridges and transit systems; concerns about highway safety; increasing congestion in the nation's metropolitan regions; and the need to streamline the regulatory system so that projects can be delivered more

quickly and at a lower cost. This session also explained how certain priorities and strategies can affect the City & County of Honolulu and also helped to identify opportunities to partner with the new administration.

Later, I attended the Opening General Session at 1:30 pm. Among the speakers were several representatives from the Obama administration, including Cecilia Munoz, Director of the White House Intergovernmental Affairs Office, and Valarie Jarrett, Senior Advisor to President Obama. The speakers emphasized the Obama administration's commitment to working with county government and the need for county government officials to also engage with them. They stressed the need for governments at all levels to work together during this the current economic crisis.

Tuesday, March 10, 2009

At 10:45 am, I attended the Educational Session Block III workshop entitled: "Implementing the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act." The moderator was Ed Rosado, Legislative Director for the National Association of Counties.

Implementing the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act will have a tremendous impact on the U.S. economy and county governments. The speakers for this workshop included key administration officials who outlined provisions contained in the landmark legislation and explained how counties could access the funding it provides.

Issues addressed in the package include new federal funding for highways, air transportation systems, public transportation systems, healthcare, human services, public housing, energy and the environment, local law enforcement and more. By attending this session, I was better able to learn from Obama administration officials how the economic stimulus package can work for the benefit of the City & County of Honolulu.

At the luncheon session at 12:15 pm, the guest speaker was Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. She spoke about the Department of Homeland Security and its goals for the coming year. She touched on three specific issues: FEMA, grants and the economy/budgetary issues. The final session I attended was the NACo President's Reception from 6:30 pm to 9 pm.

Conclusion

For myself, the 2009 NACo Legislative Conference was helpful for transportation related issues and the American Recovery and Investment Act. I am concerned with the difficult decisions that lay ahead for the City & County of Honolulu. How can we finance a multi-billion dollar rail project without breaking the bank and overburdening our taxpayers? How will we maintain the level of services and programs for our residents? In these tough economic times, we need a closer relationship with the federal government. We need to communicate directly with the Obama administration and Congress regarding these needs and challenges.

* * *

City Council
City and County of Honolulu

CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: 4/01/09

Traveler: ROMEO CACHOLA

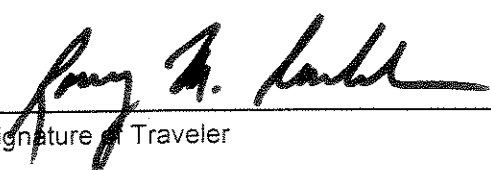
Event: 2009 NACO Legislative Conference

Location: Washington, D.C.

Dates: From March 7, 2009 To March 12, 2009

| Description | Amount | Notes |
|----------------------------|--------------------|---|
| 1. Registration Fee | 490.00 | |
| 2. Airfare | 1,200.89 | (includes agency fee; airline change fee) |
| 3. Hotel | 1,025.37 | Rate: No. of Billable Days: |
| 4. Meals | 270.74 | |
| 5. Ground Transportation | 118.95 | |
| 6. Tips | 69.36 | |
| 7. Other | | |
| Other | | |
| Other | | |
| 8. Adjustment | | |
| TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT | \$ 3,175.31 | |
| | | TOTAL TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT: \$3,175.31 |

This is to certify that the above data, based upon receipts submitted to Council Administrative Support Services via a CCLTRVL02 form, is accurate. Further, I am claiming reimbursement for expenses associated with a trip in which City business was conducted and personal funds were used to advance payment:


Signature of Traveler

APR 2 2009
Date