



# CITY COUNCIL

## CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **COUNCILMEMBER DJOU: LET THE PEOPLE DECIDE RAIL**

Honolulu City Councilmember Charles K. Djou (Waikiki, East Honolulu) introduced two propositions to allow the voters of Oahu to directly opine on rail.

“Every once in awhile, an issue rises to such enormous importance that the government should send the question to the people, and rail is such an issue. The rail debate has become so divisive that only a vote of the people will settle the matter and bring legitimate closure in our democracy,” stated Councilmember Djou. “A direct vote will benefit both supporters and opponents of a Honolulu rail system. For rail proponents, nothing could more effectively silence naysayers, send a stronger signal to Federal funding officials about local support, and bind future administrations as an affirmative rail vote. For rail opponents, nothing can more effectively kill the rail project than a direct negative statement by Oahu voters. Let’s stop the hyper rhetoric and let the people finally resolve this great debate once and for all.”

In 2006, the City placed a charter amendment question on the ballot to ask voters if bikeways should be incorporated into Honolulu’s transportation plans. Yesterday afternoon, Councilmember Djou introduced a charter amendment resolution to give Oahu voters the same choice on adopting a rail system as the City gave to voters about bikeways. In the alternative, Councilmember Djou has also introduced an amendment to the proposed transit authority resolution to ask voters if they want a rail system as well as a transit authority to run such system.

Councilmember Djou argues, “It makes no sense to have given the people the power to decide on bikeways, but not rail. It similarly would be ironic to ask voters if they want a transit authority to operate a rail system, but deny voters the opportunity to vote on whether they want the underlying rail system itself.”

If passed by the council, Djou’s charter amendment resolution will ask voters: ***‘Shall the powers, duties, and functions of the City, through its director of transportation services, include establishment of a steel wheel on steel rail transit system?’***

Any charter amendment resolution must pass the Honolulu City Council by a 2/3 majority vote, and be adopted before September 5<sup>th</sup> for placement on the November general election ballot. For the 2008 election, the mayor may veto any proposed charter amendment resolutions and City Council holds no over-ride powers on a mayoral veto of a charter amendment question.

**WHY A DIRECT VOTE ON RAIL MAKES SENSE**

<p>For Rail Supporters, A Positive Rail Vote Will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silence Naysayers</li> <li>• Give a major boost of public confidence in a controversial system</li> <li>• Send a strong signal to Federal transit officials for Federal funding that the Oahu voters want rail</li> <li>• Bind future mayors and city councils to rail</li> </ul>
<p>For Rail Opponents, A Negative Rail Vote Will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively kill the rail project</li> </ul>
<p>For All Oahu Voters, Any Vote Will:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finally bring legitimate closure to the three-decade long political debate on rail</li> <li>• Avoid a costly special election in 2009</li> </ul>

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