

Travel Report
National Association of Counties
Legislative Conference, March 7 – 11, 2009
Submitted By Councilmember Todd K. Apo

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CITY COUNCIL
HONOLULU, HAWAII

The following travel report summarizes conference events, meetings and other activities I participated in during my time in Washington DC, March 8-10, 2009. The National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Legislative Conference “*Restore the Partnership*” was held in Washington, DC, March 7-11, 2009. This yearly event focuses on providing county level officials with the opportunity to meet with and hear directly from Congressional and federal representatives about legislation and policies with city impacts. The framework of NACo’s Legislative Conference consists of meetings, workshops and educational sessions with topics that cover a wide range of local level issues. Taking center stage at several conference activities this year was the Economic Stimulus program and new initiatives of the Obama Administration. We also took the opportunity of being in Washington DC to meet face to face with Federal Transit Administration members about our High Capacity Transit Project.

Conference Highlights

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

Energy programs and housing initiatives funded in the stimulus bill dominated conference sessions on March 9, 2009. Focusing on energy were speakers: Mark Bailey, Department of Energy; Panelist Jeff Genzer, General Counsel, National Association of State Energy Officials; and Chris Mele, Legislative Director—Energy, National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). According to these speakers and panelist, \$3.2 billion of stimulus monies is aimed at energy programs. Money will be primarily dispersed via the “*Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program (EECBG)*” which gives grants to local governments for the purposes of increasing energy efficiency, reducing fossil fuel consumption, smart grids and stimulating the economy. 60% of these monies must be allocated to counties and can be applied to programs as well as capital projects. Counties with a population greater than 200,000 may apply for monies through “direct formula grants” for energy programs. Governments receiving grants must be able to demonstrate a benefit and expend these funds with 36 months.

Speakers reported that not expending this money in time could have a drastic impact on future funding. Congress is “watching” for the results of these initiatives and whether or not anything is accomplished within this timeframe. Energy programs and projects suggested for local governments to review and/or pursue included: Energy Star, low income weatherization programs, Green Buildings and Jobs; and Smart Grid transmissions systems. Additionally, Energy Secretary Steven Chu addressing the General Session on March 10 stressed the need to seize this unique opportunity for local governments to increase their energy efficiency with the support of federal funding.

Housing and economic recovery are significant elements in the stimulus package. The U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Stan Gilmont, Director Office of

Block Grant Assistance, reported that monies expended in FY08 included: \$13.61 billion or 75% for state and local recipients to aide in fiscal housing crisis in local regions; and 27% out of the \$1 billion in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to maintaining and fixing existing housing stocks in low income areas. Funding is expected to continue along this line, with a more direct connect to local governments. Along the same line, HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan speaking at the General Session promised HUD would be a “new partner with counties” and suggested governments concentrate on “home ownership” and “rentals” as housing alternatives.

Federal Transit Administration Meeting

Resolution 09-51 adopted by the Council in February 2009 authorized the establishment of Permitted Interaction Group for the purposes of investigating transit-related matters in Washington, DC.. Councilmember's designated to participate in this group included me, Council Vice Chair Garcia, Councilmember Dela Cruz and Councilmember Cachola. On Monday, March 9, 2009 members of the group met with Federal Transit officials Beth Day, Director of Project Planning and Susan Borinsky, Associated Administrator for Planning Environments. They confirmed that Jim Ryan would be taking over as the lead person on our Honolulu project. We discussed the fact that I had met with Jim on previous FTA meetings in DC. They admitted that they were in a transition period – both for the individual project and for the overall administration, based upon the new President, and were not up to speed on all details of our project. They did, however, confirm that our project continued to be viewed as a very good project, and the fact that a public vote had been taken in November in favor of the project helped overall. Based on questions of the members, we discussed the timing of our project and the efforts on-going, ahead of a full funding grant agreement. They informed us that there are various ways to deal with the use of local funding and how it might affect federal funding and matching issues. They stressed that the key was to insure that our project had coordinated the plans with the FTA, which would be done at the regional level. They were not aware of the specific conversations that were held between the City team and the western regional office. We discussed the general timelines for the EIS process, preliminary engineering, and moving into construction ahead of a full funding grant agreement. It wa again noted that so long as the FTA signed off on our timeline plans, it would not affect federal funding issues. They again confirmed that the fact that we had local funds was a significant step ahead of many other state projects. Borinsky committed to speaking with Jim Ryan to become more familiar with the proposed transit system for Honolulu in the months ahead.

City Council
City and County of Honolulu

CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: 4/9/09

Traveler: Todd Apo

Event: NACo 2009 Annual Legislative Conference

Location: Washington, D.C.

Dates: From 3/7/09 8:30am To 3/11/09 10:30am

Description	Amount	Notes
1. Registration Fee	465.00	
2. Airfare	753.34	DR: 3/7/09 2:15pm RT: 3/12/09 11:20am
3. Hotel	535.86	Rate: 267.93 No. of Billable Days: 2
4. Meals	107.61	Receipts attached
5. Ground Transportation	54.00	Receipts attached
6. Tips	0.00	
7. Other	189.64	Receipts attached; gifts from protocol fund
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment		
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	2105.45	

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

4/9/09
Date