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A COMMUNITY WIDE EFFORT TO KEEP ELEVATED RAIL OUT OF OUR CITY

A cost-disbenefit analysis of the Honolulu rail project

Disbenefit #1: Heavy rail's cost for a city our size is absurd.

[The City forecasts \\$5.2 billion to build this all-elevated rail line \(\\$1.8 billion federal, \\$3.4 billion local by tax increases\). Our population is 953,000.](#) Thus, it would cost \$5,500 per man, woman & child, and be the most expensive rail line per capita in the U.S. It will cost \$343,000 per new commuter to build. It would also increase the City's operating budget by 10% to be paid for by future tax increases.



The route: 20 miles and 21 stations



Disbenefit #2: The first 4 miles would [destroy the most productive farmland in the U.S.](#) Dr. Goro Uehara, professor of Soil Science at the University of Hawaii who has studied soils in many different countries, calls this the best farmland in the world. Why? Rich soil, year-round sun, gentle winds, abundant clean water, and four crop rotations annually



Disbenefit #3: It would permanently wall off our waterfront. Hawaii's 100-year old Outdoor Circle described it as, "In our 100 year history The Outdoor Circle has seen no other venture that holds the potential to degrade the landscape of Oahu as the proposed Honolulu Rail Transit project." It describes the "horrific visual damage" and "an



ugly scar across one of the most beautiful places on earth." Hawaii's 1000 Friends testified about, "the unprecedented visual blight that will impact our historic waterfront."



The elevated rail project has united the entire political spectrum from progressives to Tea Partiers.

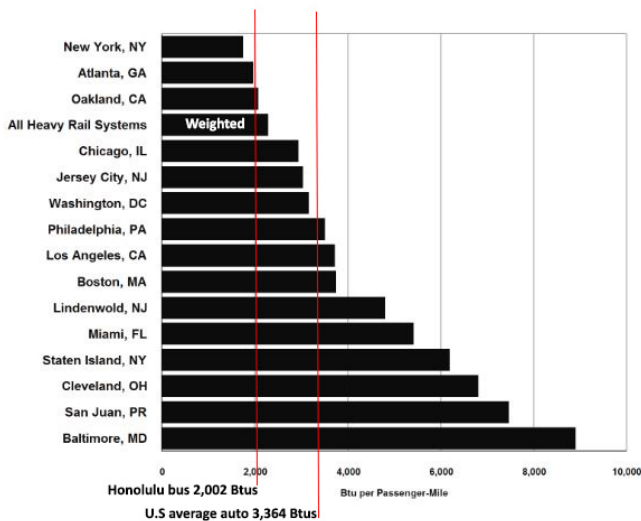
Plaintiffs in our federal lawsuit include a former Democrat Governor, a former Federal judge and Democrat Party Chair, our two major environmental groups, a Republican state senator, a law professor and the state's leading small business advocacy group.

The [latest Merriman poll](#) numbers show only 35% support for rail — only 26% among women — and that is across all ethnic and political groupings!

Disbenefit #4: Rail would result in higher energy usage. The City uses the U.S. *weighted* average energy use for their Honolulu rail transit forecasts. This average is skewed because New York City's highly efficient 1,700 Btus per passenger mile rail lines account for 60% of all the nation's rail transit passenger miles.

Comparing other cities' experiences in the table below, one would not expect energy usage of less than 4,000 Btus per passenger mile for a Honolulu system, which is *double* that of the current bus system, and far higher than even the national average for autos. Source: [US DOE Data Book](#)

Figure 2.3. Energy Intensity of Heavy Rail Systems, 2011



Sources: U.S. Dept. of Energy Transportation Data Book
Honolulu bus data from National Transit Database

Disbenefit #5: Traffic Congestion with rail would worsen. The city release below says rail will take 40,000 cars off our



highways, but it is misleading. The official EIS table below forecasts auto traffic to increase 23% if we did not build rail, and 21% if we did — a 2% difference. No motorist would ever notice it. The 40,000 number may be literally true but since it intends to mislead, it is a Lie of Omission. This is especially so since the City only compares rail to a No-Build alternative rather than to the alternatives that we have proposed.

Table 3-12 Islandwide Daily Trips by Mode—Existing Conditions, No Build Alternative, and Project

Trips by Mode	2007 Existing Conditions		2030 No Build Alternative		2030 Project	
	Daily Trips by Mode	Percentage of Total Daily Trips	Daily Trips by Mode	Percentage of Total Daily Trips	Daily Trips by Mode	Percentage of Total Daily Trips
Residents	Base		+2.3 %		+2.1 %	
Automobile—private	2,291,800	82.1%	2,815,800	81.5%	2,767,600	80.1%
Transit	166,400	6.0%	205,400	5.9%	255,500	7.4%
Bicycle and walk	333,000	11.9%	432,800	12.5%	431,700	12.5%
Total Daily Trips by Residents	2,791,200	100%	3,454,000	100%	3,454,800	100%

Nearly half of Honolulu residents still believe that traffic congestion will get better with rail because the mainstream media has not told them otherwise. While the Final EIS states, "Traffic congestion will be worse in the future with rail than what it is today," it is buried on page 1251 of the 3,100 page [Appendix A](#), and has never been mentioned by the mainstream media despite our efforts to have them do so.

Summary:

How could a project costing over \$5 billion (and counting) and with no tangible benefits, manage to get this far? It speaks to the power of Hawaii's political establishment. Had objective and full reporting on the rail project been given to the public, rail would never have had the necessary public support.

Politicians Establishing Rail Programs (PERPs)



Our supporters at work opposing the rail project



Mainland experts and non-conventional local media have helped us cut support for rail from the initial 65% to 35%, according to a recent Merriman poll. Meanwhile we have filed suit in federal court in *Honolulutraffic.com et al vs. Federal Transit Administration*. All nine of our Hawaii federal district court judges recused themselves from hearing the case because they had publicly criticized it earlier. It resulted in an appointed California judge who does not understand Hawaii. Our attorneys are confident that we will win our appeal of his initial ruling. We now await a decision by the Ninth Circuit Appellate Court.