REPORT TO THE TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE

OF

THE STATE OF HAWAII

REGULAR SESSION OF 2006

ON

ACT 178
SESSION LAWS OF HAWAII 2005
SECTION 17

SUBJECT: **AN UPDATE ON CONTRAFLOW AND OTHER TRAFFIC MITIGATION MEASURES FOR PALI HIGHWAY**

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
DECEMBER 2005

The Hawaii Department of Transportation (DOT) Highways Division has been tasked to review all studies, designs, and plans for the Pali Contraflow project and provide an update of possible traffic congestion mitigation measures for Pali Highway from Castle Junction to Bishop Street.

In 1988, there was a feasibility study on ***Pali/Likelike Highway Contraflow Lane and Reverse Operations*** prepared by Kaku Associates for the State of Hawaii Department of Transportation and the City and County of Honolulu Department of Transportation Services (DTS). The study recommended implementation of morning contraflow lanes on both the Pali and Likelike Highways.

In 1989, DOT embarked on the development of an environmental impact statement for ***Pali Highway and Likelike Highway Contraflow and Shoulder Lane Operations*** examining the implementation of contraflow and shoulder lanes on the Honolulu-bound segments of the Pali Highway and the Likelike Highway. The consultant firm of R.M. Towill Corporation was selected as DOT's consultant in the preliminary engineering and environmental phase of this project. The project went through the development of a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) and public informational meetings but was terminated in 1993 because of safety concerns and questions whether contraflow would significantly benefit windward Oahu commuters.

We support alleviation of traffic congestion on Pali Highway; however, previous studies have raised safety and operational concerns and concluded that many Nuuanu residents are opposed to contraflow operations. Since conditions have not significantly changed, we do not believe that additional expenditures are justified to update previous studies.

A primary concern with contraflow on the windward side of Pali Highway is that there would be many steep sections of roadway with nothing but rubber cones separating downhill and opposing traffic. A slight loss of control could result in a head-on collision.

Moreover, while morning contraflow would increase capacity of the windward Oahu side of Pali Highway to accommodate town-bound motorists, this would increase travel time for windward bound traffic and significantly worsen traffic congestion at signalized Pali Highway intersections in Nuuanu Valley. Traffic queues and delay at Pali Highway's intersection with School Street would be particularly adversely impacted.

Unless congestion in downtown Honolulu is relieved, we question whether the windward commuter will realize any significant overall time savings from Pali Highway contraflow. They may save a few minutes in reaching the lower Nuuanu area but will lose almost an equal amount of time in the longer backups that will occur in the downtown area, caused by more windward traffic reaching the downtown bottlenecks faster.

There is a State project currently in the design phase that involves extending the makai bound left-turn lane of Pali Highway at the intersection with Vineyard Boulevard. This project is tentatively scheduled for construction in 2007. Another upcoming project is a

City DTS signal timing optimization project in which the segment of Pali Highway/Bishop Street from School Street to Nimitz Highway is one of the 25 corridors to be evaluated. Both of these projects have the potential to benefit windward Oahu commuters.