

**Councilmember Nestor R. Garcia**  
**Chair, Honolulu City Council**  
**Board Member At-Large, National Association of Counties (NACo)**  
**Co-chair, International Committee, NACo**

**TRIP REPORT**  
**National Association of Counties**  
**meeting with**  
**United States State Department**  
**January 12-14, 2011**

**Introduction**

The meeting with the U.S. State Department comes in the year Hawaii will host the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in November. In November of 2009, in Singapore, President Barack Obama announced that the 2011 APEC meeting will be situated "in my home state of Hawaii." APEC brings together the 21 member economies and their respective heads of state, Cabinet ministers and other officials, as well as business leaders, to discuss trade, investment and other economic issues critical to the Asia-Pacific region.

Last September, as members of the National Association of Counties (NACo) traveled to China to attend an international conference in Shanghai, the idea that counties could enjoy a "long-term take-away" from the APEC conference was first broached during a meeting the NACo delegation had with U.S. Ambassador to China, the Honorable Jon Huntsman. Ambassador Huntsman kept referring to the importance of encouraging "local points of access" with China; meaning, having cities and counties in the United States reaching out to their counterparts in China as a way to strengthen ties between the U.S. and the now recognized 2<sup>nd</sup> most powerful economy in the world. I suggested that Hawaii and its four counties could help in this effort by somehow playing a role in the APEC conference.

Since that September 2010 meeting with the Ambassador, I have met with my colleagues who sit on the Executive Committee with the Hawaii Association of Counties (HSAC is a member of NACo), to encourage sister city initiatives as a means to establish a sustainable relationship with a city whose country is a member of APEC. Since then, the county councils, along with their Mayors, as well as with their respective economic development boards, have begun preliminary work into securing a sister city relationship.

It is this pursuit of sister city initiatives that prompted the State Department to call for a meeting with NACo to learn more about the effort that is being led by Honolulu. It is the State Department that is the lead coordinator for the United States when it comes to APEC summits.

**January 12, 2011**

My first day in Washington, D.C. had me meet first with newly-minted U.S. Congresswoman Colleen Hanabusa in her Longworth Building office. I learned that she will probably be a member of the House Armed Services Committee. I also met with senior staff with Congresswoman Mazie Hirono at their Cannon Building office.

I spoke with the Congresswoman by phone – she had to stay close to the House chamber to take her turn on the floor to speak about the tragic shooting of her colleague, Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords (who somehow survived being shot in the head during a meeting with her Arizona constituents on Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>). I shared with both my sister city initiative, as well as on the progress being made on the elevated, fixed-rail project in Honolulu.

Jan. 13, 2011

On this day, I met with staff with U.S. Senator Daniel Akaka. I again shared with the office my sister city initiative, as well as with the progress of the elevated, fixed-rail project.

I also took this opportunity to walk from the U.S. Capitol to the office of the National Association of Counties (NACo), on Massachusetts Avenue (close to the Postal Museum and Union Station) The Executive Director of NACo has always urged members of the national board of directors to visit the office whenever they are in Washington, DC (I am at-large NACo Presidential appointee to the board).

While at the NACo office, I was invited to sit in on the annual Presidents and Executive Directors Meeting (note: HSAC President Derek Kawakami was not at the meeting. Also, our HSAC Executive Committee is still mulling over my proposal to establish an Executive Director for our association), which was held in the Hyatt Regency Hotel, near the NACo office. It was at this meeting that I sat in on a break-out session involving transportation issues. It was conducted by NACo Senior Legislative Director Bob Fogel. Mr. Fogel shared a critical observation: the Republicans, who now control the House, recently passed a new rule that allows for amendments that would reduce funding for programs initiated by the Highway Trust Fund. This is a first – since lawmakers usually fund highway programs at current, or higher, levels.

Jan. 14, 2011

NACo was invited to meet with Ms. Reta Jo Lewis, the State Department's Special Representative for the Office of Global Intergovernmental Affairs. On May 7, 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton declared that Lewis "is leading the State Department's efforts to build relationships between states and local officials in the United States, and their counterparts around the world to benefit our objectives here."

Ms. Lewis had learned about my sister city initiative from Valerie Brown, past president of NACo and my co-chair of NACo's International Committee, during an international conference of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) in Mexico City last November. Ms. Lewis wanted to learn more about my sister city initiative, as well as a proposal from Nebraska Commissioner Chris Rogers, second vice president of NACo. Commissioner Rogers sought advice from the State Department on how NACo and its affiliate, the National Association of Black County Officials, could establish an agreement to provide technical expertise and capacity building for the 10 states and 79 counties of the Southern Sudan – which was in the midst of a referendum to either unify, or secede, from the Northern Sudan.

With regard to APEC, the Special Representative for Global Intergovernmental Affairs (SRGIA) is working to show the importance APEC plays in promoting growth and recovery in the Asia Pacific region, as well as its role in supporting the President's National Export Initiative (in a nutshell – to double U.S. exports in the next 5 years) and opening market opportunities for Small and Medium-size Enterprises (SMEs).

Ms. Lewis expressed strong support for the sister city initiative by saying it "is a model for APEC" and "we would love to work with you." She added that the initiative "is very exciting and very tangible." While the Honolulu initiative has adopted the phrase that the counties want to seek "long-term take-aways" in the form of sister city relationships that could lead to economic agreements, the State Department applies a similar term: "deliverables."

She said the sister-city initiative is similar to the State Department's drive to explore and encourage what she termed as "sub-national" relationships; first, between state and provincial governments – especially with China, since President Hu Jintao was to visit Washington in the coming week. Ms. Lewis, added, however, that the State Department is pushing to expand such relationships to include cities and counties.

She did say she would want a letter noting recognition of, and support for, the sister-city initiative from the APEC Host Committee in Honolulu – which I agreed to contact Host Committee President Peter Ho to provide to her office.

Ms. Lewis was also encouraged by the offer from NACo's Executive Director Larry Naake for the organization to host an event for APEC. Ms. Lewis was excited to have NACo as an "external partner" for APEC.

As for the Southern Sudan proposal, Ms. Lewis called for NACo to send a formal letter seeking State Department assistance.

Respectfully submitted,



Nestor R. Garcia, Chair  
Honolulu City Council  
Council District 9

City Council  
City and County of Honolulu

# CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

~~40,557.00~~

01/25/11

Traveler: Nestor Garcia

Event: Meeting of International Affairs Committee, National Association of Counties

Location: Washington D.C.

Dates: From January 12, 2011 \_\_\_\_\_ To January 15, 2011 \_\_\_\_\_

Description	Amount	Notes:
1. Registration Fee		
2. Airfare		
3. Hotel		
4. Meals	\$126.78	Receipts attached, contingency fund
5. Ground Transportation	\$72.25	Receipts attached, contingency fund
6. Tips		
7. Other		
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment		
<b>TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT</b>	<b>\$199.03</b>	

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

24-Jan-11  
Date