

CITY COUNCIL

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-3065

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August 13, 2009

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CITY COUNCIL
HONOLULU, HAWAII

Memorandum

TO: Councilmember Todd Apo, Chair

cc: Clayton Wong, Fiscal Officer
All Councilmembers
HSAC Executive Committee Members

FROM: Councilmember Romy M. Cachola, Member
NACo Transportation Steering Committee

SUBJECT: Report on National Association of Counties (NACo)
2009 Annual Conference & Exposition
Nashville/Davidson County
July 24-28, 2009

I attended the 2009 National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference and Exposition, which was held in Nashville/Davidson County, Tennessee from July 24-28, 2009. I was among some 3,000 elected and appointed county officials from across the nation who attended the event.

The conference provided county officials with opportunities to learn and gather information to help improve the effectiveness of counties. Attendees heard from top officials, elected new NACo officers, adopted new legislative policies and participated in an extensive array of educational workshops.

Friday, July 24, 2009

On day one of the conference, I attended back-to-back-to-back-to back subcommittee meetings for the Transportation Steering Committee, of which I am a member of. The subcommittees provide an opportunity to discuss issues in an informal setting. New NACo policy is often first considered at these meetings. From 12 noon – 4 pm, I attended meetings for the Ports

Subcommittee, the Airport Subcommittee, the Rail Subcommittee and the Highway-Highway Safety Subcommittee. Subcommittee members discussed such topics as reauthorization of the federal airport and aviation programs, appropriations, resolutions, user fees, security and local issues pertaining to ports, airports, rail and highways.

Saturday, July 25, 2009

The following day, I attended the Transportation Steering Committee Meeting, which was held in Presidential Ballroom C from 9 am – 12 noon. Therese McMillan, deputy administrator, Federal Transit Administration, gave a brief presentation for Transportation Steering Committee members. The committee also considered current and new resolutions ranging from transportation, the environment, energy, land use, and community and economic development.

Of particular interest to me was a proposed resolution on the Highway Trust Fund and its financial status. NACo is urging Congress to take the necessary steps to foreclose the possibility that the Highway Trust Fund will reach a negative balance prior to the expiration of the SAFETEA-LU program, including any extensions that cover FY 2010, and also ensure that SAFETEA-LU is fully funded at its authorized levels for the life of the program. SAFETEA-LU became law in 2005 and provides \$287 billion in funding for highways and transit over its 2005-2009 authorization period. It is primarily funded by the federal 18.3 cent fuel tax.

A U.S. House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit recently approved a \$450 billion, six-year surface transportation authorization bill to replace SAFETEA-LU. We were informed that the bill has the support of U.S. Rep. James Oberstar, chair of the House Committee on Transportation Infrastructure. There is also a move by the Obama administration for a surface transportation authorization proposal that consists of the following:

- An 18-month extension of SAFETEA-LU to give lawmakers until after the November 2010 mid-term elections to reach a deal on a six-year bill. However, Rep. Oberstar is opposed to this lengthy extension.
- Appropriation of \$20 billion to maintain the Highway Trust Fund. Of this amount, \$18 billion would go for highways and \$2 billion for transit in order to keep the Highway and Mass Transit Accounts within the Trust Fund afloat at current spending levels through FY 2010.

We were also told that there is likely to be no increase to the federal fuel tax. NACo has urged Congress to not repeal the exemption from the federal fuel tax for state and local governments as a means of raising funds for the Highway Trust Fund. Recent reports by several federal agencies have questioned whether there will be enough fuel tax revenue coming into the Highway Trust Fund to support the fully-authorized levels of the highway program through September 30, 2009 when SAFETEA-LU expires and into FY 2010. Both the U.S. Treasury and the Congressional Budget Office predict that the account will run dry before expiration. If the Highway Trust Fund approaches a negative balance and Congress has not acted, the Dept. of Transportation is likely to make cuts to the obligation levels on its own. Such cuts, which would include elimination of the bridge maintenance program, could negatively impact many of the federal highway programs that counties are eligible for and create problems for the next reauthorization.

A second resolution of interest was related to the future of the federal surface transportation program, which must be reauthorized. Issues under consideration for the 2009 reauthorization include the adequacy of current funding in the face of the substantial needs of the system; the adequacy of the fuel tax as a future funding source; more funding for county-owned highways, bridges and transit systems; concerns about highway safety and the 43,000 yearly fatalities; increasing congestion in metropolitan regions; and the need to streamline the regulatory system so that projects can be delivered more quickly and at a lower cost.

Sunday, July 26, 2009

In the morning, I attended the Opening General Session from 9 am – 12 noon in Delta Ballroom C. The keynote speakers were U.S. Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood and noted workforce generational expert Tamara Erickson. According to LaHood, the Obama Administration understands and wants to change city and county governments' modest say in how U.S. DOT funds are spent. The change would be by directly funding metro regions, which currently receive their money via state pass-through. LaHood said that the Obama Administration also desires to substantially overhaul how transportation funding is awarded. Funding should be determined less by the mode of transportation and more by communities' priorities for their growth and needs.

Erickson, an award-winning author and expert on organizations and the changing workforce, spoke on the topic "Avoiding the Workforce Crisis: How to Beat the Coming Shortage of Skills and Talent." She said the growth in the size of the workforce in the U.S. is slowing dramatically, with not as many people looking for jobs after the recession is over. Over the past 30 years the number of Baby Boomers entering the workforce has remained in the double digits, but Erickson said the numbers are beginning to decline in the U.S. and around the world. She also discussed how today's workforce may include up to four generations of employees who share the same work space, which is bound to create some friction as workers seek to understand each other. As members of the Baby Boom generation continue to work well into retirement age, Erickson said it is important to understand the differences the generations bring to work relationships.

In the afternoon, I attended an Education Session Block entitled "Save Lives by Making Rural Road Safety a Priority" and held in Governor's Ballroom A from 1 pm – 2:15 pm. The speaker was Matt Ryan, Coconino County Supervisor from Flagstaff, Arizona. Attendees learned about the various tools and techniques that Coconino County has used to improve safety on rural and isolated roads, which can, in the long run, reduce costs and more importantly, save lives. These tools and techniques include:

- Installation of new guardrails
- Road safety assessments
- Road safety audits
- Utilizing the Safety Edge treatment for the two ARRA projects scheduled for construction next spring that will replace two sections of non-standard guardrail
- Implementing a Pavement Management System

From 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm, I attended the NACo Board of Directors Sitting as a Resolutions Committee in Delta Ballroom B. NACo's of Directors took up some 70 policy resolutions that dealing with issues such as reducing the amount of time to receive Social Security Disability payments to public health workforce programs and more than 20 resolutions in the environment, energy and land use policy arena.

Monday, July 27, 2009

The day featured a full slate of educational sessions, awards and dynamic speakers. The first event I attended was entitled "Railroads Across America" held in Presidential Ballroom A from 9 am – 10:15 am. The speaker was Shayne Gill, program manager for an organization called Aviation, Passenger Rail & Public Transportation. One of the interesting topics Gill discussed was the \$9.3 billion in funds from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) for high speed/intercity passenger rail system. Of this amount, \$1.3 billion will be for capital improvements and security upgrades for Amtrak. The remaining \$8 billion will go towards the development of new intercity and high speed rail (110 mph) passenger service. The U.S. DOT has been directed to conduct RFPs to develop, build and operate high-speed rail systems in 11 corridors, including NEC from Washington, DC to New York City. Grants will be distributed under the Intercity Passenger Rail Grants to States and the High Speed Corridors grant programs authorized in last year's Rail Safety Improvement Act. The legislation does not specify a specific distribution among the two programs, but does note that a priority shall be given to funding high speed rail projects. The Federal Railroad Administration must issue a strategic plan for the distribution of funds within 60 days of enactment, and issue program guidance within 180 days. The federal share of these grants is up to 100 percent.

In the afternoon from 2:15 pm – 4:00 pm, I attended the General Session in Delta Ballroom C, where HUD Deputy Secretary Ron Sims and *Newsweek* editor Jon Meachum were the featured speakers. In his address, Sims said that NACo has a seat at the White House's public policy table. He told attendees that the administration welcomes NACo's input, aspirations and candor. Sims also said that the administration wants NACo to continue its leadership role and for member counties to continue working effectively with federal agencies. Meachum discussed his new book "*American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House*." A native of Tennessee, Meachum said there is much to be learned from Jackson, who was also from Tennessee, that is applicable to today's political climate, including Jackson's mistakes and volatility. According to Meachum, studying "flawed figures" like Jackson can make contemporary Americans "more attuned to the failings of our time." Jackson was motivated by the shortcomings in his life, including his loss of the presidency to John Quincy Adams in 1824, after having won a plurality of popular and electoral votes. The loss would drive his championing of popular democracy. Meachum said that one lesson from Jackson's time has an unlikely parallel in the way that the Obama administration has reached out to supporters via the worldwide web and social networking. Jackson understood that his supporters didn't just want to vote for him, "they wanted to be characters in an ongoing drama." To that end, Jackson created a direct channel to the people — his own newspaper. This would be the 21st century equivalent of President Bush founding Fox News or President Obama creating National Public Radio (NPR).

Attendees also heard via video from Health Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, who had originally been scheduled to speak, but remained in Washington to assist in the efforts for health care reform. As HHS secretary, Sebelius runs one of the largest civilian departments in the federal government. She has more than 20 years of experience in state government, including as governor of Kansas, and has been a leader on health care issues especially in the areas of children's immunization and health coverage.

Tuesday, July 28, 2009

From 10:00 am – 12 noon, the HSAC delegation attended the Election of Officers and Business Meeting, which was held in Delta Ballroom C. NACo members elected Lenny Eliason from Athens County, Ohio as 2nd vice president. Mr. Eliason is the newest member of the executive committee and joins the new leadership team headed by NACo President Valerie Brown from Sonoma County, California; NACo President-elect Teresa Altemus from Gloucester County, Virginia; First Vice President Glen Whitley from Tarrant County, Texas; and Immediate Past President Don Stapley from Maricopa County, Arizona. During the meeting, members also adopted more than 100 policy positions on issues ranging from the Clean Water Act to Transportation Trust Funds to Rural Revitalization.

Presidential Appointees

In addition to the election of officers, NACo President Valerie Brown announced her presidential appointees for 2009-2010, a copy of which is attached. Ms. Brown appointed:

- (1) Several dozen members to serve as chair and vice chair of various committees, subcommittees, standing committees and ad hoc committees.
- (2) Several members to at-large seats to the NACo Board of Directors.

As one of the 10 at-large appointees to the Board of Directors (*see page 7 of attached document*), I am grateful to Ms. Brown for giving me the opportunity to serve NACo and HSAC in this capacity. I would also like to extend my gratitude to our numerous friends from both NACo and HSAC for their support.

In the afternoon, I attended "Reporting, Transparency and Accountability: Recovery Act and Beyond"—which was one of three concurrent forums that focused on the successful implementation of the Recovery Act. The forum explored the sweeping new rules in the Recovery Act about reporting, transparency and accountability of federal funds spent. Participants discussed what is really required, as well as why and how these new rules will become a hallmark of federal funding in the future and what government transparency means.

To conclude the 4-day event, I attended the inaugural concert celebration from 7:30 pm – 9:30 pm, which was held in the Delta Ballroom.

Enclosure

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City Council
City and County of Honolulu

CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: August 14, 2009

Traveler: Romy Cachola

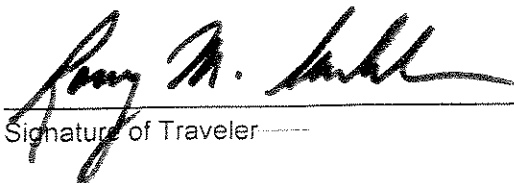
Event: 2009 NACO Annual Conference

Location: Nashville, TN

Dates: From July 24, 2009 To July 28, 2009

| Description | Amount | Notes: |
|----------------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1. Registration Fee | \$465.00 | Reg. order confirmation notice attached. Check already issued |
| 2. Airfare | \$1,155.10 | DR: 7/22/09 4:20 pm RT: 8/1/09 7:56 pm. Check already issued |
| 3. Hotel | \$1,169.82 | |
| 4. Meals | \$274.14 | Receipts attached |
| 5. Ground Transportation | \$99.00 | Receipts attached |
| 6. Tips | \$74.37 | List attached |
| 7. Other | \$13.11 | Guest parcel desk - check email |
| Other | | |
| Other | | |
| 8. Adjustment | | |
| TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT | \$3,250.54 | \$1630.44 is the balance for hotel, meals, trans., tips & other |

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

AUG 18 2009
Date