RES25-111
Testimony

PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE & TRANSPORTATION (PI&T)

MISC. COM. 252

April 28, 2025

Dear Chair Cordero, Vice Chair Okimoto and Committee Members,

Please accept my unwavering support for Mr. John Katahira's appointment to the HART Board of Directors.

I have personally worked very closely with Mr. Katahira over the years while at the Department of Environmental Services (ENV) and he has proven himself to be an invaluable asset to any organization that he encounters. For example, ENV was required to deliver a large, complex wastewater tunnel under the hills of Kalaheo to connect two treatment facilities. Some members of the community were opposed to the project, despite it being a federally mandated requirement, and were quite contentious at times. Mr. Katahira was able to successfully navigate the community with his level-headed intellect and calm demeanor and address all of the community concerns to the point that they no longer opposed the project allowing ENV to complete it under budget and ahead of schedule. Without his involvement, the project could have been delayed, adversely affecting ENV's reputation with the Environmental Protection Agency, State of Hawaii Department of Health, federal courts and other critical stakeholders.

The HART Board requires an individual who can balance technical expertise, financial oversight and a vision for sustainable transportation. Mr. Katahira's proven track record of leading a successful engineering firm, coupled with his governance experience and community involvement, makes him an ideal candidate to contribute to the board's mission of delivering a reliable and efficient rail system for Honolulu.

I respectfully urge the Honolulu City Council to consider Mr. Katahira for appointment to the HART Board of Directors. His leadership, integrity and dedication to Hawaii's future will undoubtedly serve the board and our community as well.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions or concerns.

Sincerely

Lori Kahikina, P.E.

April 28, 2025

Aloha Chair Cordero, Vice Chair Okimoto, and Honorable Councilmembers,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for John Katahira's nomination to the HART Board of Directors.

I have had the privilege of working closely with John over the years during my tenure as Deputy Director of the City's Department of Environmental Services (ENV), particularly through his work with the Limtiaco Consulting Group, Inc. Throughout our collaboration, John consistently demonstrated the highest level of professionalism and technical expertise. His contributions to ENV on several complex and high-profile infrastructure projects were invaluable.

John is a highly skilled engineer with a strong capacity for critical thinking and problem solving. He approaches challenges with creativity and analytical precision, delivering thoughtful and effective solutions. Equally important, John is an exceptional communicator and facilitator. His ability to engage with the community and stakeholders—especially on projects that required sensitivity and tact—has been instrumental in building trust and consensus.

John Katahira would be an outstanding asset to the HART Board of Directors, bringing both technical knowledge and collaborative leadership. I strongly urge you to approve his nomination.

Mahalo for this opportunity to submit testimony.



Michael O'Keefe