



# CITY COUNCIL

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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## **COUNCILMAN BERG OFFERS A BETTER WAY TO HELP OUR SENIORS**

*Honolulu, Hawaii* -- After casting a series of no votes at the most recent full Council meeting at Honolulu Hale and the only council member in opposition to the Carlisle administration's proposed operating budget for 2011-2012 (Bill 13 CD1), West Oahu Councilman Tom Berg countered sewer rate increases (Bill 20), a property tax increase (Resolution 11-74) and gas tax increase (Resolution 11-73) with a better way. Berg voiced his strong concern that subsidizing rounds of golf at City courses while sewer fees skyrocket out of control is not the way to go.

Berg: "I refuse to impose on my constituents the lethal combo of a fuel tax increase, a property tax increase, and a sewer rate increase while a whopping nine million dollars per year from the general fund is diverted to subsidize the game of golf at Oahu's six municipal courses operated by the City. Our public golf courses should be self-sufficient and charging patrons a rate based on the amount necessary to sustain them. Instead, all taxpayers on Oahu are essentially playing golf whether they know it or not by forking over a percentage of their property tax to those actually on the course who do wind up playing."

"We have seniors not washing their clothes regularly, not flushing the toilet on every turn, letting their lawns go without water, and having the family car go unwashed while cutting back on time spent bathing themselves only to have their penny-pinching efforts squashed with yet still a higher sewer bill. My office's mission is to champion holding the line on taxes and fees, to stop the fleecing and get our priorities straight. We must protect our seniors. This was the generation that rationed food and commodities to win a world war. Taking every spare penny of savings they have by taxing them for the essentials is unconscionable."

Paul Kelly, the director of Ewa's Asing Park, remarked: "Working with the seniors, I have come to appreciate them so much more and understand that many are coming to the end of their lives. I hope you can protect all their rights and services and make their last years good in every way."

Berg's proposal is to end the \$9 million golf subsidy in Bill 17 and utilize that savings for helping residents on fixed incomes cope with runaway sewer rates and restore the Leeward Coast Benefit Package of \$2 million to the very communities having to cope with the aftermath of housing Oahu's lone municipal solid waste landfill.

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