

# ***ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS***

## ***A RESOLUTION***

No. 2017 - 48

### **URGING THE HAWAI'I STATE LEGISLATURE TO CONTINUE ITS SUPPORT OF THE HAWAIIAN RAILWAY SOCIETY**

WHEREAS, in 1885, a 21-year-old sailor by the name of Benjamin Franklin Dillingham was aboard the ship *Whistler* that sailed from San Francisco to Honolulu, while on shore leave one day, he went out horseback riding and fell off his horse and broke his leg; and

WHEREAS, while in the hospital recovering, his ship left port, he fell in love with his nurse and decided to make Hawai'i his home, and soon after that he became quite wealthy and influential in the early Honolulu community with his various business ventures; and

WHEREAS, Dillingham believed the 'Ewa Plain was an excellent location for settlement despite the lack of water and the difficulty to access the region, and leased land in the 'Ewa Plain from James Campbell to start a business or two; and

WHEREAS, Dillingham approached King David Kalakaua in September 1888, to get a charter and soon after organized the Oahu Railway and Land Company (OR&L); and

WHEREAS, the charter granted Dillingham the right to purchase, own, develop, sell, and deal in lands along and near the railway, and OR&L was granted permission to build 12 miles of railroad that would connect Honolulu and the Pearl River Lagoon; and

WHEREAS, on November 16, 1889, the same day of King David Kalakaua's birthday, OR&L officially opened for business and treated 4,000 people to free round-trip rides on the 11 trains that ran that day; and

WHEREAS, after World War I, the OR&L passenger traffic dropped while freight traffic increased requiring the conversion of some older passenger cars into "Can Cars" or "Pineapple Cars" that carried empty cans from the dock to the canneries, as well as the full cans back to the docks; and

WHEREAS, when World War II broke out, there was increased demand in both passenger and freight traffic, and OR&L entered into a number of military contracts; and

WHEREAS, OR&L hauled military troops, military cargo, munitions, livestock, oats and hay, oil products, molasses, bagged sugar, products of all kinds and even garbage, and in 1943 alone more than 2.5 million people rode the train; and

WHEREAS, due to wartime material shortages, OR&L could only do emergency repairs on its equipment and by the end of the war the tracks and trains were in poor condition and OR&L had to increase its rates in order to pay for repairs; and

WHEREAS, in 1946, a tsunami struck the north shore on the island of O‘ahu wiping out a large section of tracks, and almost immediately crews from the OR&L and neighboring plantations banded together to repair the tracks and got the job done in just under two weeks; and

WHEREAS, the condition of the tracks and equipment caused the business to decline, and on New Year’s Eve of 1947, the OR&L had one final passenger ride going from Kahuku to the depot in Honolulu (located at Iwilei Road and North King Street); and

WHEREAS, when passenger operations ceased, the railway sold off most of its equipment for scrap and right-of-way of the track; and

WHEREAS, the U. S. Navy bought some of the equipment, and continued to run trains on that right of way; and

WHEREAS, in 1950, the U. S. Navy purchased the track and right-of-way from West Loch at Pearl Harbor to Lualualei Ammunition Depot Access Road in Nanakuli for \$1.00 in the name of “National Defense” and maintained the track until 1980 when it was ceded back to the State of Hawai‘i; and

WHEREAS, the OR&L continued serving the docks and a scaled-back system serving the pineapple canneries, slaughterhouses, and few other industries until the end of 1971 and the U. S. Navy stopped running trains in the mid 1970’s; and

WHEREAS, the OR&L was the backbone of transportation on O‘ahu for almost 60 years; and

WHEREAS, one particular OR&L locomotive helped launch the Hawaiian Railway Society; and

WHEREAS, Engine WACO #6 served the plantation from 1919 to 1952 and weighed 25 tons, and was considered a liability and was to be scrapped; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, a few railroad buffs got permission to move Engine WACO #6 from Waialua to Lualualei Ammunition Depot for restoration with spare and extra order of Baldwin train parts and they formed the Hawai‘i Chapter of the National Railway Society; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, the Hawai‘i Chapter of the National Railway Society was able to get the last stretch of track from Ewa to Nanakuli to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Railway Society is an educational, non-profit organization with a two-fold mission: to save, restore, and protect as much of the old railroad equipment as possible given its limited resources and to dedicate and keep this page of Hawai'i's history alive through perpetuating this cultural history; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Railway Society has restored 6.5 miles of track and works to restore more, and has also restored several vintage diesel and steam locomotives to operation; and

WHEREAS, the famous Dillingham parlor car has also been restored and is available to passengers on the weekly rides;

WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Railway Society provides rides on Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. and Sundays at 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., and passengers ride and listen to a narration about the Hawaiian Railroad and its effect on the culture and history of Hawai'i; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Railway Society operations are run mostly on volunteer work; and

WHEREAS, some of the tracks used by the Hawaiian Railway Society and the train rides are threatened by certain proposed developments and projects that will cross the train tracks; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaiian Railway Society is in need of support to continue its operations.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs at its 58<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in Seattle, Washington, in the malama of 'Ikuwā and the rising of Māhealani, this 4<sup>th</sup> day of November 2017, urging the Hawai'i State Legislature to continue its support of the Hawaiian Railway Society; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Operations Manager for the Hawaiian Railway Society, Ewa-Pu'uloa Hawaiian Civic Club, 'Ahahui Sīwila Hawai'i O Kapolei, Pearl Harbor Hawaiian Civic Club, as well as the Governor of the State of Hawai'i, President of the State Senate, Speaker of the State House of Representatives, Chair of the State Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs, Chair of the State House Committee on Ocean, Marine Resources, & Hawaiian Affairs, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and all County Mayors.



The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted in the malama of 'Ikuwā and the rising of Māhealani on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of November 2017, at the 58th Annual Convention of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs in Seattle, Washington.

*Annelle C. Amaral*  
Annelle C. Amaral, President