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Hawaii Should Be Diplomacy Center of Pacific in View of 2011 APEC Leadership Meeting Announcement

By Gene Ward, 11/16/2009 4:08:22 PM



I commend national and state leaders for their roles in Hawaii's selection as host of the 2011 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leadership Meeting.

The high-level international gathering will be hosted by President Barack Obama and is expected to attract over 10,000 participants, including senior government officials, business leaders, international economists, Asia-Pacific experts, and worldwide media.

APEC consists of 21 member economies that constitute approximately 40.5 percent of the world's population and over half of the world's GDP. The APEC Leadership Meeting will not only provide a badly-needed boost to Hawaii's economy, but it will also solidify Hawaii's role as the meeting place of the Pacific.

I also appreciate President Obama's selection of Hawaii as the host site and hopes that both the President and Governor Lingle will continue to bring important international events to the Islands.

Hawaii is a gathering place of cultures and people. By hosting the APEC Leadership Meeting and other events of worldwide significance, we establish ourselves as an international diplomacy center. The APEC Leadership meeting is our jumping off point to becoming the Geneva of the Pacific.

Representative Gene Ward is a former staff member of the United Nations and a former Peace Corps Country Director. He currently serves as a member of the State House of Representatives and represents House District 17, Hawaii Kai—Kalama Valley.

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