

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2007/09/25/news/story05.html>  
© 1996-2007 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | [www.starbulletin.com](http://www.starbulletin.com)



# Ferry concerns stymie state

## Democrats will gather today to determine how best to proceed

By Richard Borreca  
[rborreca@starbulletin.com](mailto:rborreca@starbulletin.com)

State government leaders are still wondering what to do after the Hawaii Supreme Court ordered that an environmental study be done for the Hawaii Superferry.

On the heels of the high court decision, a Maui circuit judge put service to Kahului on hold pending arguments whether Superferry can operate while the study is done. Also last month, protesters on Kauai blocked the Superferry from docking at Nawiliwili Harbor, and that run has been postponed since.

Starting today, House and Senate Democrats caucus to discuss if they should come back for a special session to help the ferry resume service.

Some said the vehement reaction by opponents on Kauai toward the ferry raises questions about whether Hawaii is losing its tolerance.

"The bigger issue is how we bring the people and the state together, and that is going to be more of a challenge," said Rep. Sylvia Luke (D, Pacific Heights-Punchbowl).

"This started out as a Superferry issue, but it has now escalated into a development issue. Now it is a bigger issue, bringing people together and starting a healing process," Luke said.

Gov. Linda Lingle, an early supporter of the ferry who was cursed and booed last week when she went to Kauai with a team of officials to brief citizens about plans for the ferry, said Hawaii is losing its tolerance.

Her trip had taken on a military tone as Lingle announced a "unified command" of county, state and federal law enforcement officials who would arrest demonstrators who violated state or federal laws.

In light of those threatened demonstrations, ferry officials canceled Friday the planned resumption of service to Kauai for an indefinite period.

Lingle said yesterday she is struggling to find a compromise.

"My bigger and broader concern is the future of a sense of community in the state. This is giving us a very bad reputation," Lingle told reporters yesterday during a informal news conference at the state Capitol.

Commenting on last week's Kauai protests at the meeting, Lingle said "it was beyond rude, it was un-Hawaii-like."

Legislative leaders are also saying that if the state courts on Maui and Kauai do not permit the ferry to resume operations while the environmental assessment is done, the Legislature is reluctant to step in.

Senate President Colleen Hanabusa, for instance, said a state court could rule that the ferry can operate, but under certain conditions.

"If there is a conditional ruling, I can't see us doing something. It is almost impossible to think people are going to go in against the court," Hanabusa said.

And House Speaker Calvin Say says his Democratic majority will not act until it views this week's court decisions.

"We would have to see if the ferry can live with any conditions imposed by the court," Say said.

State courts on Maui and Kauai are hearing requests for a permanent injunction to block service to both islands while the environmental assessment is completed.

Article URL: <http://starbulletin.com/2007/09/25/news/story05.html>  
© 1996-2007 The Honolulu Star-Bulletin | [www.starbulletin.com](http://www.starbulletin.com)