

-An editorial— Decision is needed on reliever airport

If the state Legislature does nothing else of major importance this year, it should at least make a clear decision on a site for a general aviation reliever airport on Oahu.

airport on Oahu.

Yet the danger is that once again the
Legislature will fail to act, with its
members divided, failing to appreciate
the urgency of the issue, or taking refuge in unviable alternatives.

THIS IS one of those issues where it

is easiest for lawmakers to do nothing. They can rationalize they are saving money. They avoid antagonizing constituents, except the minority involved

n general aviation. Yet the need — and the dangers of a nidair collision or other disaster —

are clear.

General aviation, which is really more business than pleasure flying, is growing. That will continue and could not legally be stopped if we wanted it

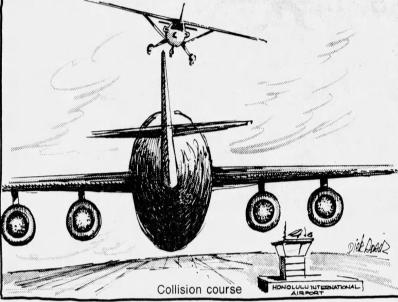
to be:
At the same time, the lethal mix o
jetliners, military planes and smalle
and slower general aviation aircraft a
Honolulu International Airport por ends a tragedy bound to happen ever

There has been some relief in airpor traffic recently due to the air control lers' strike and the national recession' effect on tourism. But that is tempor The congestion will start growing

Now is the time we should be dealing with the problem — and the choices will never get easier.

AS WE HAVE noted before, there are no really good choices, only realistic possibilities and a tough decision to

To their credit, Governor Ariyoshi



ten a nine-page committee report that discusses the alternatives and explains why Poamoho is the best of these now and for the foreseeable future. Some

To their credit. Governor Ariyoshi and his administration have tired, here and in Washington, for other alternatives and decided to again recommend Poamoho in Central Oahu.

So has the state Senate transportation committee headed by Senator Mary George, and Oahu Republican backing a Democratic governor on an issue she stresses should not involve partisan politics.

Moreover, Senator George has written and in section of the service of the properties of the pr

ness of picking a site for a reliever arror that is within the state's capability to acquire and develop."

• Modifying Honolulu International is not a realistic alternative.

"Airport planners and users assure us that flight patterns and HIA operations cannot simply be readjusted to accommodate an increase in operations."

They say the \$20 million projected cost of a new reliever airport "would look like small change" compared to the costs of modifying HIA

• Because of dangers now, physical restraints on other locations, and the alternatives likely into the foreseeable

blast zone from an ammunition storage area which the Navy says can't be re-duced.

The report said the committee "con-The report said the committee con-cluded that the problems connected with the Waipio site are greater in number and more serious in nature than proponents of this location have

• Factors for Poamoho include these • Factors for Poamono include these points: There are relatively few neight presidents who might be disturbed by noise. There is room for later expansion, but meantime some cane land taken could be leased back for continuing agricultural use.

While it is remote, the site fits in the PAA's criterion of within "reasonable."

While it is remote, the site fits in the FAA's criterion of within "reasonable surface travel time" for potential users, something important legally if the state wants make present users at Honolulu International relocate to the new airport. (Dillingham Field does not fit that criterion, the report says.)

SOME WILL BE unhappy with the Senate committee report, including some in general aviation who want a second airport almost as convenient in location as Honolulu International.

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But the essential public-interest issue is not just the happiness and convenience of those in general aviation. It is the lives and safety of people—including many Hawaii residents daily—who fly in or out of Honolulu International.

tional. It is the lives of people here who would be under a mid-air crash. Ironically, many live in districts represented by legislators who have been opposed to Poamoho or almost any reasonable alternative.

LEGISLATORS are elected and get paid to make tough choices. But in the case of the general aviation reliever airport that choice for years has been a non-choice that puts off an inevitable need, adds to the costs, and perpetuates clear and growing danger to human

This session the Legislature owesch to everyone, not to mention its own election year image, to make a positive decision. It has run out of excuses

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