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State gets OK to link H-3 leg, Kam Hwy. ^{9/5/86}

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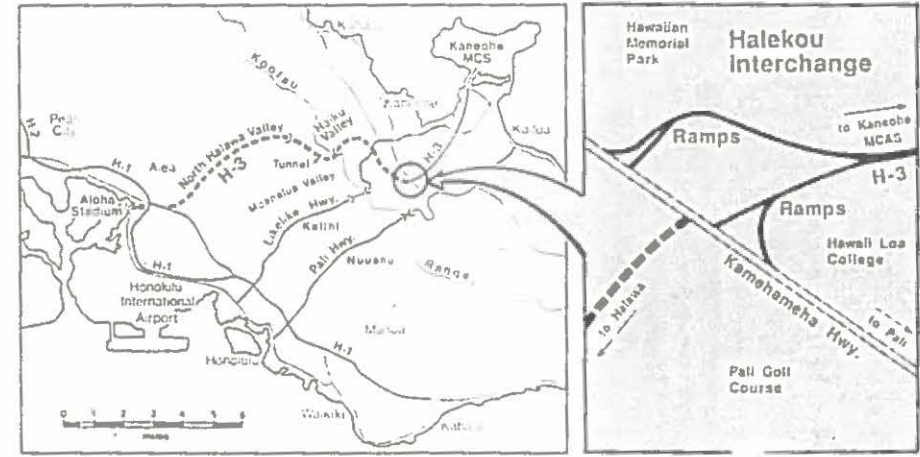
State transportation officials yesterday got the go-ahead to connect Kamehameha Highway and the completed section of the H-3 Freeway near the Kaneohe Marine Corps Air Station.

The action is not related to whether the controversial H-3 project, which would connect Kaneohe and Halawa near Aloha Stadium, can be completed.

State Transportation Director Wayne Yamasaki yesterday said the intersection should be completed within 11 months. Part of the approximately 4-mile stretch of completed H-3 must be resurfaced and have shoulder work done, Yamasaki added.

The completed section was built in 1974. About 10 1/2 miles remains to be built, including a tunnel through the Koolau mountains.

Besides linking Kamehameha Highway and the Marine base, the new connection will allow some Honolulu-bound commuters to bypass the usually con-



The state will complete work on the Halekou Interchange of the H-3 Freeway, including the ramps, shown by solid lines, at right. The proposed H-3 route is shown by dotted lines.

gested Castle Junction. Yesterday's action came about because the Stop H-3 Association — through its attorney, Boyce Brown — agreed to the state's proposal. The agreement was filed in federal court

yesterday. A court injunction prohibits the state from proceeding with the trans-Koolau project unless it has the association's approval. "We told them we'd have no

problem with them using the completed part," Brown said. That was 10 years ago — "but they never did it," he said. Brown said he suspects that state inaction was an attempt to keep community pressure on

Stop H-3. But, said Brown, "the pressure got on to them."

If the entire H-3 Freeway is to be completed, Congress must approve an unusual exemption for the project from federal environmental laws. Lawmakers will reconvene next week.

The exemption is necessary to overcome a 1984 federal court ruling that said H-3's proposed route would violate a park protection section of the federal Highway Act because it would abut Hoomaluhia Park in Kaneohe.

The U.S. House has approved an exemption with its version of the Transportation Act. Hawaii's Sen. Daniel Inouye has said he will try to add a Senate exemption this month.

But the state faces a Sept. 30 deadline to either stick with H-3 or withdraw the project and seek substitute projects. At stake is \$716 million in federal funds earmarked for H-3.

If the state allows the deadline to pass without an exemption in hand, it will have until 1990 to clear remaining court hurdles and begin construction on the remainder of H-3.