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Yamasaki 'optimistic' despite slow pace of H-3 legislation

By Floyd K. Takeuchi
Advertiser Government Bureau

Congressional consideration of measures to save the H-3 Freeway is moving slowly, but not so slowly as to be of concern, says the state's top transportation official.

Transportation Department Director Wayne Yamasaki yesterday said he remains "very optimistic" that Congress will approve an environmental exemption that will allow the long-delayed freeway to be completed.

Gov. George Ariyoshi on Tuesday committed the state to H-3 by allowing the so-called withdrawal deadline to pass. Tuesday was the last day to withdraw H-3 from the federal highway program and begin applying the \$716 million to other Oahu transportation projects.

● In the House, the Public Works Committee yesterday approved a bill proposed by Hawaii Rep. Daniel Akaka that would extend Tuesday's deadline to 10 days after Congress adjourns, expected on Oct. 10. The measure now goes to the

House floor.

However, Akaka's version is not the same as the Senate deadline extension bill that Hawaii Sens. Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga got through.

The Public Works Committee yesterday tacked on a number of additions to the House bill, changes unrelated to Hawaii. If the bill passes the House, it will have to go to a conference committee to work out differences.

● In the Senate, Inouye was prevented from proposing his environmental exemption amendment to the Senate's interim spending bill. The measure was put on hold for much of yesterday so that senators could debate President Reagan's veto of sanctions against South Africa. The bill is scheduled to be reconsidered today.

Inouye's amendment will be one of more than 130 that will be considered.

The state needs the exemption to clear a 1984 federal court ruling that said a portion of H-3's proposed route next to Kaneohe's Hoomaluhia Park would violate park protection provisions of the highway act.