

U.S. official lauds selection of

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By Jay Hartwell

Advertiser Government Bureau

U.S. Secretary of Transportation Jim Burnley yesterday hailed the selection of Palima Point as the best place to build a Big Island spaceport, calling the choice "a major step forward for America's commercial launch facility."

"Today, private sector companies launching telecommunications and weather satellites can only use federally owned launch facilities," said Burnley. "The State of Hawaii's decision both creates an alternative and sets an example. I hope we'll see many states follow Hawaii's lead."

His statement came a few hours after the state announced results of a \$200,000 spaceport study by a Cambridge, Mass., consulting firm.

Arthur D. Little, Inc., said the commercial launching facility should be

built at Palima Point, below the plantation town of Pahala in Ka'u, south of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

The firm picked Palima after studying seven Big Island sites: one at Hamakua, three at Puna and three in Ka'u near South Point. The firm examined each site's geology; safety; land ownership and development potential; population; environmental, cultural, astronomical and socioeconomic concerns, and infrastructure requirements.

Arthur Little vice president Harry Foden told legislators yesterday Palima is the best site because the 11,000-acre area is uninhabited; there are only four landowners (Bishop Estate, C. Brewer, State of Hawaii and International Air Service Co., Ltd. of California, which has macadamia nut trees on some of its 5,400 acres); and present land use is passive agriculture. The closest town — Pahala — is beyond a 2.9 mile radius

safety zone where the public would not be permitted during launchings.

The state Department of Business and Economic Development wants private industry to build a four-launch pad facility, capable of handling Titan III booster rockets, although the state expects most of the estimated 12 launchings a year would use smaller Scout or Delta booster rockets, which are about 120 feet high. The facility would not be used for manned shuttle launchings.

The study estimates it would cost the state about \$7 million to provide power, water and access to the site.

Before anything happens, the state must fund an environmental impact statement for the site. A bill providing \$1.2 million for the study is before the House Finance Committee.

The consultant's second choice was Kahilipali Point, which is closer to South Point and where 500 acres of free

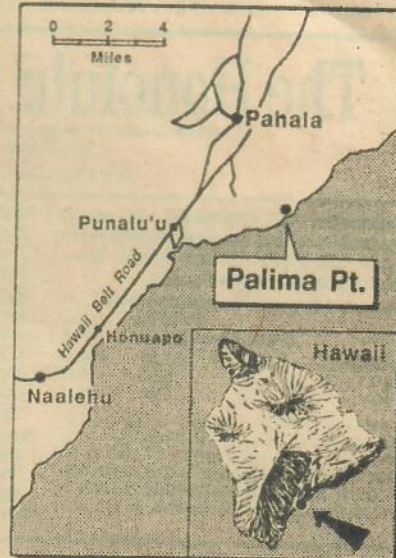
Palima for spaceport

land was offered by C. Brewer. Mufi Hannemann, Brewer spokesman, said the same offer would apply for Palima, where the firm owns less than 500 acres.

Ulveling also said the department has applied for a NASA space technology research grant; is negotiating with unnamed Mainland interests to establish a Pacific Space Center, which would be supported by the University of Hawaii and Stanford University, as well as private space and communication companies.

Meanwhile yesterday, state Rep. Andy Levin announced he will conduct a public meeting at 6:30 tonight at Ka'u High School cafeteria to discuss the Palima choice.

Levin said he has asked the Department of Business and Economic Development to take part in the meeting.



Advertiser map
Palima is consultant's choice for space port site on Big Isle