



TESTIMONY OF
DANIEL NĀHO'OPI'I
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
Tuesday, March 11, 2025
1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 229

In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 615
NOMINATION OF CHRISTIAN WEST
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of Christian West's nomination to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Board of Directors.

With over two decades of experience advocating for worker rights in Hawai'i's hotel union, Mr. West exemplifies the qualities we need at the HTA Board of Directors. As the President of ILWU Local 142, he leads Hawai'i's largest private union, representing 16,000 workers and overseeing contract negotiations for almost 10,000 hotel employees. He has effectively navigated complex labor relations, demonstrating strong communication and organizational skills.

Mr. West's ability to build relationships between union members and hotel management is essential for creating a collaborative environment that encourages growth and understanding. His dedication to safety and educating workers about their rights has been evident throughout his tenure as the Hawaii Longshore Division Representative.

As the HTA continues to work on improving workforce development in the tourism industry and develops its next five-year strategic tourism plan, along with updates to the state's Tourism Function Plan, Mr. West's insights into the challenges faced by hotel workers and the opportunities for the hotel industry will be invaluable. We are excited about the positive impact his guidance will have moving forward. He is the Vice Chair HTA's Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committee and a member of the Branding Standing Committee.

Mr. West's dedication to Hawai'i and its community is reflected in his professional work and his proactive role in civic and legislative affairs. Furthermore, his diverse experience extends beyond union leadership. As a longshoreman and crane operator, he understood the critical aspects of operations at our ports. Mr. West is dedicated to youth development, as evidenced by coaching ILH high school wrestling teams and mentoring young wrestlers. His combination of leadership, advocacy, and community involvement makes him a strong candidate for the board. We wholeheartedly support his nomination and believe he will contribute significantly to the HTA.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Testimony of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Tuesday, March 11, 2025
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
GM 615
**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the
Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee,
CHRISTIAN WEST, for a term to expire 06-30-2028.**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Committee.

I strongly support the confirmation of Mr. Chris West to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA).

Chris started as a longshoreman with Hawai'i Stevedores, where he managed cargo flow at Hawai'i's ports. He began managing union grievances and contract enforcement and has educated members on work policies and ensured a safe working environment, in addition to representing the longshore workers in collective bargaining. He became the president of ILWU Local 142 in 2022, where he leads Hawai'i's largest private union representing 16,000 workers and oversees contract negotiations and labor relations.

He has also been active in the community where he has mentored and coached high school girls and boys in wrestling, provided low-cost martial arts programming for elementary students, and implemented anti-bullying initiatives.

Testimony of James Kunane Tokioka

GM 615

March 11, 2025

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Chris has extensive leadership experience with advocating for workers, ensuring fair wages, benefits and working conditions for thousands of members. I believe that Mr. West's ability to cultivate relationships, together with his strong leadership background and skillset, will continue to bring positive contributions as a board member of the HTA.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer my strong support.



UNITED PUBLIC WORKERS

AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO

THE SENATE
KA 'AHA KENEKOA

THE THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION OF 2025

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 1:00 PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Re: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee, Christian West, for a term to expire 06-30-2028.

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

The United Public Workers, AFSCME Local 646, AFL-CIO ("UPW") is the exclusive bargaining representative for approximately 14,000 public employees, which includes blue collar, non-supervisory employees in Bargaining Unit 1 and institutional, health, and correctional employees in Bargaining Unit 10, in the State of Hawaii and various counties. UPW also represents approximately 1,500 healthcare workers in the private sector.

UPW **strongly supports** GM615, which nominates Mr. Christian West, Jr. to the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority ("HTA"), for a term to expire 06-30-2028.

The success of Hawaii's tourism industry is built upon a strong and stable workforce that is focused on providing quality service and meeting guests' needs with the "Spirit of Aloha". As the president of the International Longshoremens & Warehouse Union, Local 142 ("ILWU"), which includes approximately 10,000 hotel workers across the State of Hawaii, Mr. West has worked for decades to ensure fair wages, benefits, and working conditions for hospitality workers and Hawaii's working families.

As Hawaii seeks to develop a more sustainable and culturally responsible tourism industry, we believe that Mr. West's commitment to elevating Hawaii tourism in an ultra-competitive global market while simultaneously improving the conditions of its workforce in a rapidly changing environment make him a valuable addition to the HTA board.

We humbly urge the committee to support Mr. West's confirmation. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kalani Werner', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kalani Werner
State Director

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Honolulu, Hawaii 96817-1914
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362 East Lanikaula Street
Hilo, Hawaii 96720-4336
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KAUAI

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Lihue, Hawaii 96766-1803
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MAUI

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Wailuku, Hawaii 96793-1436
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Toll Free - Molokai/Lanai only



The Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

March 11, 2025

Room 229

1:00 PM

RE: GM 615, Submitting for Consideration and Conformation to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee, Christian West, for a Term to Expire 06-30-2028

Attention: Chair Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Glenn Wakai, and Members of the Committee

The University of Hawaii Professional Assembly (UHPA), the exclusive bargaining representative for all University of Hawai'i faculty members across Hawai'i's statewide 10-campus system, **strongly supports GM 615**, to confirm the appointment of Christian West to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Mr. West has been an experienced advocate for hotel worker rights for over two decades. As the president of ILWU Local 142, Mr. West has overseen contract negotiations and labor relations for over 150 agreements, ensuring fair wages, benefits, and safe working conditions for nearly 10,000 hotel workers. Mr. West's strong communication and organizational skills have resulted in positive negotiations, enhanced conflict resolutions, and strengthened relationships between workers, businesses and policymakers.

Overseen by the HTA's Board of Directors, the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) aims to improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents and communities through responsible and sustainable tourism management. Mr. West's extensive knowledge and understanding of labor issues and contract negotiations makes him a valuable addition to the Board. Mr. West's compassion and commitment to improving the quality of life for Hawaii's hotel workers will help to ensure the HTA achieves its mission.

Respectfully submitted,

Christian L. Fern
Executive Director
University of Hawaii Professional Assembly

**University of Hawaii
Professional Assembly**



HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM
A S S O C I A T I O N

Testimony of Mufi Hannemann

President & CEO, Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association

Senate Committee on Economic Development & Tourism

Governor's Message 615: Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee, Christian West

March 11, 2025

I am honored to submit testimony in support for Governor's Message (GM) 615, nominating Chris West to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board of Directors.

Chris West is a proven and respected leader in Hawai'i's labor movement who has dedicated his career to advocating for workers. He began as a longshoreman with ILWU Local 142, where he quickly gained the respect of his peers through hard work, fairness, and an unwavering commitment to his union brothers and sisters. Through decades of service in leadership roles—including as Hawai'i Longshore Division Representative and Negotiating Committee Member—Chris has consistently demonstrated integrity, strong leadership, and a deep understanding of labor relations. Today, as President of ILWU Local 142, he leads the largest private sector union in the state, representing over 16,000 workers, including nearly 10,000 hotel employees who are a vital part of our visitor industry.

Chris brings an invaluable labor perspective to the HTA Board. The workers he represents are the unsung heroes of our tourism industry—those who ensure our hotels, resorts, and tourism businesses function day in and day out. Chris understands firsthand the critical role hospitality workers play in sustaining Hawai'i's economy and has embraced the importance of their contributions in shaping the future of our industry.

What sets Chris apart is not just his extensive experience in contract negotiations and labor relations but his ability to collaborate with all stakeholders, including business leaders, policymakers, and tourism officials. He is widely regarded as fair, ethical, and pragmatic, with a genuine commitment to ensuring a balanced approach that benefits both workers and the long-term success of Hawai'i's visitor industry.

In the short time he has served on the HTA Board, Chris has already shown that he understands the importance of collaboration and the need to take a broad, thoughtful

approach to tourism management. His experience, leadership, and perspective make him an outstanding choice for this role, and I have full confidence in his ability to contribute meaningfully to the board's efforts.

For these reasons, HLTA supports the confirmation of Chris West to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board of Directors, and I respectfully urge the committee to advance his nomination.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Gemma G. Weinstein, President

Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President

Friday, March 7, 2025

Hawaii State Legislature
Senate Committee on Economic Development & Tourism
State Capitol
415 South Beretania St.

Re: GM 615 – West, C. (Board Member, Hawaii Tourism Authority)

Chair DeCoite, Vice-Chair Wakai and Members:

UNITE HERE Local 5 – a local labor organization representing more than 10,000 hotel, health care and food service workers throughout Hawaii would like to offer comments in support of GM 615 and the appointment of Mr. Christian West as Board member to the Hawaii Tourism Authority.

As an organization we have known Mr. West for several years now, and in that time have observed first-hand his steadfast commitment towards defending Hawaii, our people and our way of life. As the leader of the ILWU, Mr. West brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience to a post he has already held and while our two organizations may have historically been on opposing sides – I am today proud to support Mr. West's nomination.

I am confident that Mr. West, if confirmed, will continue to serve in our community's best interest, and work to ensure that the interests of Hawaii's hardworking families in the hospitality industry are represented on the Tourism Authority effectively.

Thank you for your consideration and I ask for your Committee's full support of GM 615.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cade M. Watanabe', written in a cursive style.

Cade M. Watanabe



Randy Perreira
President

HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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The Thirty-Third Legislature
The Senate
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Testimony by
Hawaii State AFL-CIO

March 11, 2025

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM615 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION
TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAII'I TOURISM AUTHORITY, GUBERNATORIAL
NOMINEE, CHRISTIAN WEST, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2028

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the committee:

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO is a state federation of 76 affiliate labor organizations representing over 69,000 union members across Hawaii in industries including healthcare, construction, hospitality, entertainment, transportation, and government. The Hawaii State AFL-CIO serves its affiliates by advocating for the rights of working families, promoting fair wages, safe working conditions, and policies that strengthen Hawaii's workforce.

We strongly support GM615, which confirms Christian West to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority for a term that expires on June 30, 2028.

Mr. West has over two decades of experience advocating for workers in Hawai'i's hotel industry, ensuring fair wages, benefits, and working conditions for thousands of hospitality employees. His leadership as President of ILWU Local 142 has strengthened labor relations and fostered collaboration between workers, businesses, and policymakers.

Hawai'i's tourism industry depends on a strong and stable workforce. Mr. West's deep understanding of labor issues and extensive experience negotiating contracts make him a valuable addition to the Board. His commitment to improving the conditions of Hawai'i's hospitality workforce aligns with the goal of building a more sustainable and responsible tourism industry. We respectfully request the committee's support for Christian West's confirmation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Perreira".

Randy Perreira
President



HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

RANDY PERREIRA, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii
The Senate
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

March 11, 2025

GM 615 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, CHRISTIAN WEST, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6-30-2028

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the nomination Christian West, to the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority.

Mr. West currently serves as the President for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU), Local 142 which represents nearly 10,000 hotel workers within the state. Mr. West is a seasoned leader and an advocate for worker rights with knowledge and expertise in contract negotiations, conflict resolution, hotel management, and legislative affairs, among others. The ILWU Local 142 is a valuable and key stakeholder in our hospitality and tourism industry and we find that it would be valuable and appropriate for the board to have a voice that represents the employees that work in the industry. Given Mr. West's extensive experience and his organizations membership, we find that he will prove to be a valuable asset as the board looks to develop an effective, balanced, and sustainable blueprint to support and promote our state's main economy.

We offer our unequivocal support and endorsement of Christian West's nomination to the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority, and kindly ask the favorable consideration of your committee for his candidacy.

Respectfully submitted,

Randy Perreira
Executive Director



The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair
and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
Hawai'i State House Senate
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: STRONG SUPPORT FOR GM 615- SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, CHRISTIAN WEST, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2028.

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ana Tuiasosopo, and I am a Trustee and District Representative for the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 3, representing heavy equipment operators, mechanics, surveyors, and other skilled tradespeople in Hawai'i's construction industry. I submit this testimony in strong support of GM 615.

Mr. West is a seasoned labor leader in the Hawai'i's tourism industry with over two decades of experience advocating for workers' rights. His work in negotiating contracts, conflict resolution, and labor relations will bring unique insight and a worker's perspective to the board. A worker's perspective has been missing from the board of directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority for decades.

We humbly ask for your consideration and confirmation of GM- 615. We support Mr. West.

Mahalo,

Ana Tuiasosopo,

Trustee/District Representative
International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 3



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

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*Troy J. Benevides
Business Manager-Financial Secretary*

*Neal Katto
President*

The Thirty-Third Legislature
House of Representatives Committee on Labor
Testimony by IBEW Local 1357
March 11, 2025

TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM615 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, CHRISTIAN WEST, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2028

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the committee:

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1357 is in strong support of GM615, which confirms Christian West to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority for a term that expires on June 30, 2028.

Mr. West has over two decades of experience advocating for workers in Hawai'i's hotel industry, ensuring fair wages, benefits, and working conditions for thousands of hospitality employees. His leadership as President of ILWU Local 142 has strengthened labor relations and fostered collaboration between workers, businesses, and policymakers. Hawai'i's tourism industry depends on a strong and stable workforce.

Mr. West's deep understanding of labor issues and extensive experience negotiating contracts make him a valuable addition to the Board. His commitment to improving the conditions of Hawai'i's hospitality workforce aligns with the goal of building a more sustainable and responsible tourism industry. We respectfully request the committee's support for Christian West's confirmation.

Respectfully submitted,

Troy Benevides
Business Manager/Financial Secretary



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM615, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND
CONFIRMATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAII TOURISM
AUTHORITY, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, CHRISTIAN WEST, FOR A TERM TO
EXPIRE 06-30-2028.**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
MARCH 11, 2025**

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Economic Development and Tourism Committee:

The Democratic Party of Hawai'i **STRONGLY SUPPORTS** GM615, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee, CHRISTIAN WEST, for a term to expire 06-30-2028.

Mr. Christian West's extensive experience and unwavering commitment to advocating for worker rights make him an outstanding candidate for this position. As the President of ILWU Local 142, he has demonstrated exceptional leadership in representing over 16,000 workers. His proven skills in negotiation, conflict resolution, and labor relations will be invaluable to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. Mr. West's deep understanding of the tourism sector, combined with his dedication to fostering positive relationships between union members, hotel management, and stakeholders, positions him uniquely to contribute to the goals and initiatives of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. His commitment to fair wages, benefits, and working conditions aligns with the values that are essential for the sustainable growth of Hawai'i's tourism industry.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify in strong support of GM615. Should you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Democratic Party of Hawai'i at legislation@hawaiidemocrats.org.

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII

PO Box 2041 • Honolulu, HI 96805 • www.hawaiidemocrats.org



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

LOCAL UNION NO. 1186 • Affiliated with AFL-CIO

1935 HAU STREET, 5th Floor • HONOLULU, HI 96819-5003
TELEPHONE (808) 847-5341 • FAX (808) 847-2224

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
Hearing on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, 1:00PM, Conference Room 229

RE: TESTIMONY IN **SUPPORT** OF NOMINEE CHRISTIAN WEST, **GM 615**

Honorable Chair Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Glenn Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1186 (IBEW 1186), is comprised of over 3,000 men and women working in electrical construction, telecommunications, civil service employees, and educator and faculty associations.

IBEW 1186 **SUPPORTS** the nomination of Christian West for the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority.

Mr. West has unique skills acquired in leadership positions of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU). Experience in contract negotiations, financial management, and the care and concern of working families in the State of Hawaii, are all necessary to help steward one of Hawaii's most important and consequential industries – Tourism.

IBEW 1186 has complete faith in the ability of Christian West to take on the many challenges that the tourism industry faces and find solutions that are compatible with the needs of our community and the visitors that come to enjoy our Aloha.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this **SUPPORT** of **GM 615**.

Sincerely,

Damien T.K. Kim
Business Manager/
Financial Secretary