

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Thursday, February 20, 2020
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room**

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2696, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO GREEN FEES**

Senate Bill 2696, Senate Draft 1 proposes to appropriate funds to the Office of Planning to develop a feasibility and implementation plan focused on the establishment of a green fees program. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure and offers the following comments.**

Hawaii's natural resources are huge economic assets, an essential piece of our tourism industry, and support the well-being of our communities. A University of Hawai'i study examined the various services provided by Oahu's Ko'olau forests - including drinking water recharge, flood prevention, water quality, carbon storage, biodiversity, and cultural, aesthetic, recreational, and commercial values. These services were calculated to have a net present value of between \$7.4 and \$14 billion.¹ Coral reefs annually protect \$836 million in averted damages to property and economic activity in Hawai'i.² Despite the value of our forests and oceans, Hawai'i invests less than 1% of the total state budget into maintaining these assets.

The establishment of green fees in several other tourism focused economies, has allowed places like the Republic of Palau, Galapagos Islands, New Zealand, and the Maldives, among others, to more substantially invest in their natural resources - reducing the overall impact of tourism on

¹ Roumasset, J., J.B. Kaiser, N. Krause, D. Mecham and J. Wooley. 1997. Draft Environmental Valuation and the Hawaiian Economy. University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization, UH-Mānoa.

² Storlazzi, C.D., Reguero, B.G., Cole, A.D., Lowe, E., Shope, J.B., Gibbs, A.E., Nickel, B.A., McCall, R.T., van Dongeren, A.R., Beck, M.W., 2019, Rigorously valuing the role of U.S. coral reefs in coastal hazard risk reduction: U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 2019-1027.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

M. KALEO MANUEL
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

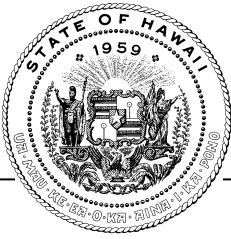
AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

their environments, improving the quality of visitor experiences, and supporting community stewardship of these special places. In all cases, visitors and many residents do not mind paying a green fee because they know it goes back to caring for the beautiful places and resources they have come to enjoy. In 2001, the Department conducted a study to determine Hawaii's willingness to support increased funding for watershed protection. Respondents were presented with various means by which the increased funds could be raised (general funds, taxes, or fees). A majority supported the use of environment-related taxes (7.4 out of 10), or a visitor-related tax (8.0 out of 10).³

The establishment of a green fee is an important piece to closing the gap between existing and needed funding for the management of Hawaii's natural resources. This in conjunction with innovative financing mechanisms, such as carbon offsets for reforestation and improved forest management, would move Hawai'i considerably forward in addressing climate change and Hawaii's tourism economy. A green fee program would bolster the State's existing investments in natural resource management and help fill Hawaii's conservation funding gap.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

³ Department of Land and Natural Resources. November 2011. The Rain Follows the Forest: A Plan to Replenish Hawaii's Source of Water.



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DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF PLANNING

Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS
Director, Office of Planning
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Thursday, February 20, 2020
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

in consideration of
SB 2696, SD 1
RELATING TO GREEN FEES.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of Planning supports the intent of SB 2696 SD 1, requiring the Office of Planning to conduct a feasibility study on assessing tourism green fees. The Office of Planning has met with stakeholders to discuss a proposed SD 2 for SB 2696 for your committee to consider. Should the committee adopt the proposed SD 2 for SB 2696, the Office of Planning estimates that the overall cost of such a feasibility study and implementation plan would require a lesser appropriation of \$450,000 from Office of Planning's previous estimate of the work required by SB 2696.

The Office of Planning has been actively working on sustainable development and climate adaptation to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Office of Planning notes that the Hawai'i State Legislature recently established the state's Sustainability Coordinator position within the Office of Planning, pursuant to the Supplemental Appropriation Act of 2016.

The Office of Planning recognizes that statewide sustainability planning and coordination is demanding work beyond the capacity of one individual position. The Office of Planning requests additional staffing operating expenses to support comprehensive statewide sustainability coordination and implementation of Hawaii's sustainability laws, goals, policies, priorities, and planning throughout government; provided that it does not replace or adversely impact the priorities indicated in the Executive Budget.

The Office of Planning presently has a limited capacity and does not have the existing resources to staff or fund such a feasibility study and implementation plan. Such a feasibility study and implementation plan would need to be contracted by the Office of Planning through a competitive request for proposal.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

SB-2696-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2020 3:39:46 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/20/2020 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Stephanie P. Donoho	Testifying for Kohala Coast Resort Association	Support	No

Comments:



Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, February 20, 2020 at 1:00 P.M.
Conference Room 211, State Capitol**

RE: SB 2696 SD1, RELATING TO GREEN FEES

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** SB 2696 SD1, which requires the Office of Planning to conduct a feasibility study on assessing tourism green fees.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

The Chamber recognizes the threat that climate change poses to our state. Hawaii's business community is committed to reasonable, rational and practical solutions to this threat.

In the coming years, Hawaii's economy faces the threat of economic loss due to effects of climate change. Innovative, outside the box solutions will be required to stem the tide of its effects. With estimates of Hawaii's conservation funding gap as high as \$360 million annually – green fees could be a source of funding that can fill this deficit.

This study would be the first step in helping to establish critical investments towards our natural resources and continue to make Hawaii an ideal destination to visit.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 2696 SD1.

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 304

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS; Feasibility Study on Green Fees

BILL NUMBER: SB 2696, SD-1

INTRODUCED BY: Senate Committees on Water and Land and Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Requires the office of planning to conduct a feasibility study on assessing tourism green fees. Effective 12/31/33. The basic idea appears to be unconstitutional.

SYNOPSIS: Requires the Office of Planning to prepare a feasibility and implementation plan to assess a green fee on a per visitor, per stay basis. Appropriates \$ _____ to do the study, provided that the Office of Planning must first obtain matching funds from the private sector.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/31/2033.

STAFF COMMENTS: The concept of a “green fee” is similar to an arrival tax or departure tax, which some national governments have implemented. In the United States, individual states do not have power to impose such a tax, because it would violate the Privileges and Immunities Clause of the U.S. Constitution as burdening the constitutional right of citizens of the United States to travel freely between states. *Crandall v. Nevada*, 73 U.S. (6 Wall.) 35 (1867), for example, voided a departure tax of \$1 per person leaving the state by any railroad, stagecoach, or other common carrier for that reason.

Digested 2/18/2020



February 20, 2020
Conference Room 211
Hawai'i State Capitol
425 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI. 96813

TESTIMONY RE: OF SB 2696 – RELATING TO GREEN FEES

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

My name is Ann Botticelli and I am testifying on behalf of Hawaiian Airlines in support of SB2696 SD1. We believe it is important to fully fund the protection of our natural environment and support the amendments to this measure.

We are Hawai'i's pioneer airline. We just celebrated 90 years of service in the islands, and nearly 90 percent of our 7,400+ employees reside here. As we've expanded to become a domestic and international carrier, we have made sure to stay tethered to our home Islands. We very much appreciate the inseparable link between the economic sustainability of our tourism industry and a sustainable environment, and we urge your committees to foster this conversation by moving this bill forward.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Ann Botticelli
SVP Corporate Communications and Public Affairs

SB-2696-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2020 6:57:45 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/20/2020 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Andrea Quinn	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2696-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/19/2020 3:38:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/20/2020 1:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
helen raine	Testifying for Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture	Support	No

Comments:



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

LATE

Testimony of

Mufi Hannemann
President & CEO
Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association

Committee on Ways and Means
February 20, 2020

Senate Bill 2696 Senate Draft 1 – Relating to Green Fees

Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Committee, mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association, the state's largest private sector visitor industry organization.

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association—nearly 700 members strong, representing more than 50,000 hotel rooms and nearly 40,000 lodging workers —supports the feasibility study on a green fees program as outlined in Senate Bill 2696 SD1.

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) appreciates the initiatives that are being explored by the State Legislature to address the preservation of our environment and our natural resources. Through the feasibility study, with oversight by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and the Department of Land & Natural Resources, we will be able to identify our status in closing the conservation funding gap. The study also proposes to analyze current funding for natural resources and climate change, tax and fee structures that currently exist to support climate change mitigation efforts, and also, takes a look at the taxes and fees imposed on the visitor industry. With more and more of the TAT being diverted to the general fund, this exercise will hopefully shed some light and clarity on how those funds are being used to help our community.

Through the proposed feasibility study, we will also be able to identify our current status in meeting the goals set forth by the Hawai'i Climate change mitigation and adaptation initiative. We also appreciate the fact that HTA will represent the hospitality industry and play a major role in the deliberations of this measure. For these reasons, we support the study proposed in Senate Bill 2696 SD1.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Testimony in **SUPPORT** of:
SB2696 SD1 Relating to Green Fees

Submitted by:

John N. (Jack) Kittinger, PhD

19 February 2020

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, Senator English, Senator Harimoto, Senator Inouye, Senator Kahele, Senator Kanuha, Senator Kidani, Senator Moriwaki, Senator Riviere, Senator Shimabukuro, Senator Taniguchi, and Senator Fevella,

I am a conservation professional, with over 15 years of experience working on protecting our environment and the life-supporting benefits it provides to our communities and economy.

In the conservation world, Hawai'i is a recognized global leader, having hosted the World Conservation Congress in 2016. One of the most proud moments of my career was watching our community host this global convening of conservation practitioners, and sharing our commitment to the Aloha+ Challenge. The commitment to effectively managing 30% of our lands and waters by 2030 now has global buy-in and will be a featured global commitment in this year's global Convention on Biological Diversity.

The world has changed since 2016. The recent report of the IPCC tells us unequivocally that we have a **mere ten years to take action to reduce the most damaging impacts of climate change**, otherwise we risk passing thresholds that we cannot recover from. This will impact our shorelines, our food and water supply, our climate, our rainfall and more. These changes are already beginning to impact our communities.

In the face of these impacts, **protecting nature has never been more important**. It is **our shared responsibility, our collective kuleana**, to ensure the protection and

survival of our ecosystems - our "green infrastructure" that sustains us all, so that our natural resources can sustain future generations.

Our environment is critical to our communities and our economy. As it declines, so does our economic resilience, our cultural identity, and our social connections. It is also our competitive edge in the global tourism marketplace - the numbers back this up: nature and the oceans are the top reasons people visit our islands. If nature declines, so do our visitors and the jobs and income they support for our communities. It really is this simple.

Even as we all recognize the critical importance of the environment, we struggle to support it. The rising cost of living in Hawai'i puts myriad demands on our budget. Often the environment is seen as just one of many things that we need to shore up against rising costs, stable or declining revenues, and an ever-shifting set of conditions that we often cannot control - like the sudden outbreak of the coronavirus.

This is why **we need innovative ideas and new models**, which is why this bill is so important. **I have personally spear-headed the development of this initiative, working hand-in-hand with thought leaders from the conservation and visitor industry sectors. I've put more than 2 years of effort into this idea because I know it is a solution in other geographies such as the Galapagos, Palau, Mexico, and other places.** It can be a solution for us as well - providing a way to support environmental stewardship, while improving the visitor experience.

This bill would fund a collaborative, stakeholder-driven study that will assess the extent to which these proven approaches can be adapted to our unique, and vulnerable island homes.

I strongly support the proposed amendments to the bill, including:

- Clear specification that the conservation deficit analysis and funding priorities "*include but not be limited to efforts to: a) meet the Aloha+ Challenge Natural Resource Management and 30 by 30 marine goals; b) investments focused on protecting our ocean, forest, and freshwater ecosystems to ensure the perpetuation of the resource and resilience to climate change; and c) priority areas, such as parks, beaches, and trails, where natural resources feature prominently in the visitor experience;*"
- Clear language to more strongly consider "greening" current funds in place of, or in addition to, establishing a new green fee;

- An explicit direction for a comparison of how much tax/fee revenue residents versus visitors contribute to natural resource management on a per person annual basis;
- Removal of the call for development of a five-year green fee program, as this would be included in OIP protocol;
- Other technical amendments; see attached updated bill summary.

The clock is ticking on climate change. We have to proactively adapt to the changes that we know are intensifying. And **investing in nature-based adaptation and innovative conservation financing is the path we must take. This bill will help us create a pathway - together - to get there.** I strongly support this initiative and thank you for your willingness to consider in this year's session.

Thank you for considering my testimony,

John N. (Jack) Kittinger, PhD

Testimony in **SUPPORT** of:
SB2696 SD1 Relating to Green Fees

Submitted by:
Emelia von Saltza
67-419 Kukea Circle
Waialua, HI 96791



WAM DM
February 20th, 2020

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, Senator English, Senator Harimoto, Senator Inouye, Senator Kahele, Senator Kanuha, Senator Kidani, Senator Moriwaki, Senator Riviere, Senator Shimabukuro, Senator Taniguchi, Senator Fevella,

My name is Emelia von Saltza; I'm an Environmental Economist and North Shore resident, and I am testifying in **support of SB2696 SD1, Relating to Green Fees**.

I've spent the last year personally researching visitor green fees around the world and their applicability to Hawaii – whether that is through establishing a new visitor green fee, or greening current fees and taxes assessed on visitors. Green fees could provide the unique ability to secure green bonds, which could fund the upfront costs of large-scale natural infrastructure projects related to the Aloha+ Natural Resource Management Targets and natural infrastructure related to climate adaptation. I appreciate the previous Senate Committee's support in moving this bill forward.

Based on conversations I have had with the community and the Office of Planning, I would humbly request your consideration of friendly amendments that will work to ensure a balanced and focused approach to the study. **I have attached a highlighted mocked up draft for your consideration and hopeful adoption into a Senate Draft 2.**

In those proposed amendments please find that, I support stronger language in the bill towards “greening” existing fee structures in addition to, or in place of, establishing new green fee(s). I support the amendments that clarify “the conservation funding gap” as that which relates to *the Aloha+ Challenge Natural Resource Management 2030 goals; investments focused on protecting our ocean, forest, and freshwater ecosystems to ensure the perpetuation of the resource and resilience to climate change; and priority areas where natural resources feature prominently in the visitor experience*. I support other technical amendments not listed here.

As both an economist and an environmentalist, my concern for this growing deficit is twofold. Determining the exact path forward amidst various green financing options, requires all stakeholders coming together. This study allows for a wise and cross-sectoral approach to address an urgent problem.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Emelia von Saltza

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO GREEN FEES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

SECTION 1. The legislature finds that each year, Hawaii's reefs, oceans, beaches, and forests provide billions of dollars in value to the economy, supporting the well-being of our communities and visitors alike. We cannot disentangle our environment from our economy. Our visitors come to Hawaii because of our natural resources. If they degrade, so does the value of our visitor industry. For our tourism industry, our ecosystems are vital. Inseparable from our culture, our environment is integral to our both resident and visitor experience.

The legislature also finds that even though these natural resources are critical for the visitor industry and resident communities, Hawaii invests less than one per cent of its state budget into those assets. Hawaii's total conservation funding gap has been estimated as high as \$360,000,000 annually, constituting a major unfunded liability that poses a significant risk to our business climate and our economic resiliency.

The legislature further finds that our State's vital ecosystems and the resources they harbor continue to decline, due to lack of adequate investment in proven and effective conservation approaches. Data demonstrates growing concern that tourism's positive contribution to the economy may not outweigh the impact that visitors have on the environment. Ten million visitors enjoyed the benefits of Hawaii's ecosystem and natural environment in 2019, and the number of visitors is expected to rise. Increased demand on our natural resources requires innovative conservation financing mechanisms focused on reversing the decline in our ecosystems and the associated risks for our visitor industry and communities.

The legislature also finds that innovative and green financing mechanisms such as green fees and allocating greater percentages of existing funding are trending around the globe as triple bottom-line solutions to better manage visitor impacts on eco-systems and natural resources. Green fees may be referred to as eco-taxes, tourist taxes, green taxes, and environmental, conservation and tourism levies. In general, green fees require mandatory payments made ~~by visitors~~ to government entities for the explicit purpose of supporting conservation and natural resource management.

By prioritizing the protection of our ocean, forest and freshwater ecosystems and following the benchmarks ~~and mandates required by the Hawaii climate change mitigation and adaptation initiative enacted as Chapter 225P, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and~~ by following the data generated set forth in under the Aloha+

Challenge natural resource management goals, the legislature seeks to better understand if and how a green fees program can accelerate support for these efforts, while ensuring that implementation is fair and beneficial for all.

The purpose of this Act is to appropriate funds for a feasibility and implementation plan focused on the establishment of a green fees program, for the explicit purpose of closing the conservation funding ~~gap and meeting the goals of the Hawaii climate change mitigation and adaptation initiative and the Aloha+ Challenge natural resource management goals~~gap and meeting the goals of the Aloha + Challenge natural resource management goals to: 1. ~~+~~Increase fresh water capacity by 100MGDillion gallons per day by 2030; 2. Protect 30% watershed protectionforests by 2030; 3. ~~s~~Significantly increase the percentage of Hawaii's marine waters under active management by 2030; 4. ~~+~~Implement Hawaii's biosecurity plan to address priority invasive species by 2030; and 5. ~~+~~Increase the percent of threatened and endangered native species managed in Hawaii by 2030.

SECTION 2. Definitions. As used in this Act, unless otherwise requires:

"Green Fees" means any fee or designated funding stream collected from residents and non-resident visitors for the purposes of offsetting their environmental impact, financing conservation initiatives that protect natural resources and improve resident and/or visitor experience, and increasing

awareness of the value of natural resource management and ecosystem stewardship.

SECTION 2. (a) The office of planning shall prepare a feasibility and implementation plan to ~~assess~~establish a green fees ~~program. —on a per visitor, per stay basis.—~~The plan shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- (1) Identification of need, and priorities for which funds from a green fees program shall be directed. This should include but not be limited to efforts to meet the Aloha+ Challenge natural resource management 2030 30-by-30-goals; investments focused on protecting our ocean, forest, and freshwater ecosystems to ensure the perpetuation of the resource and resilience to climate change; and priority areas where natural resources feature prominently in the visitor experience;
- (2) ~~—(1)—~~An analysis and breakdown of Hawaii's conservation funding gap that exists in current natural resource ~~and climate changemanagement~~ funding relative to ~~meeting the meeting the goals set forth in chapter 225P, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and the Aloha+ Challenge natural resource management goals, need and priorities identified in subsection (1); and the~~ -and the extent to which Hawaii's unfunded conservation liabilities will increase based on the current rate of funding;
- (3) An analysis and review of the current utilization and effectiveness of natural resource ~~and climate changemanagement~~ funding throughout state departments and agencies;
- (3) An examination of all existing tax and fee structures that exists to support ~~climate change mitigation~~natural resource management efforts, including an estimated per resident annual contribution;
- (4) An examination of all existing tax and fee structures placed on the visitor accommodation and tourism industry, including an estimated per visitor annual contributionies;

(5) An analysis and recommendations ~~discussion of~~ “greening” the existing funding structure and the advantages or disadvantages of increasing, decreasing, or reallocating existing taxes and fees relative to the option of establishing a new green fee;

—(6) Development of a proposed green fee program rate structures that ~~that would most efficiently be required to~~ close the conservation funding gap over a five-year period;

(7) Consideration of other i a dedicated bond issuance or other innovative financing mechanisms that will ensure the most effective management of funds and result in revenues collected being used explicitly for the purposes of this Act;

(8) Identification of potential short-term and long-term impacts on the Hawaii's tourism industry, and overall economic outlook, including but not limited to possible market impacts, economic and workforce considerations; and

(9) Development of a ten-year implementation plan with rollout of fees funding from a green fees program to begin no later than 2022, including a proposed fee schedule proposed sources of funding, benchmarks and indicators, and mandatory impact reporting.

(b) The office of planning, in consultation with the Hawaii tourism authority, and the department of land and natural resources, shall ~~create an advisory group made up of~~ engage with stakeholders and industry leaders. ~~This group shall include:~~ including but not limited to:

(1) Representatives from relevant state agencies, including the department of budget and finance, department of taxation, and department of business, economic development, and tourism;

(2) Business and industry groups;

(3) Non-governmental organizations with an interest in climate change and natural resource protection;

(4) Legislators; and

~~—(5) Hawaii climate change mitigation and adaptation commission; and~~

(6) Any other relevant parties that the office of planning deems necessary to advise in the development of the plan, assist in outreach and engagement efforts, and provide comments upon completion.

(c) The office of planning shall submit an interim report to the legislature of its progress, findings, recommendations and timeline for completion no later than December 31, 2020. ~~The interim report shall also include a preliminary determination of the conservation funding gap amount.~~

(d) The office of planning shall submit a final report to the legislature of its progress, findings, and recommendations, including the determination of the conservation funding gap amount and gap, and proposed legislation for the establishment and implementation of a green fees program, no later than October 31, 2021.

(e) Nothing in this Act shall preclude the office of planning from executing contracts with appropriate entities having expertise ~~inn tourist industry~~—green fees.

SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ _____ or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for a feasibility and implementation plan prepared by the office of planning relating to the establishment of a green fee program in Hawaii.

The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of planning for the purposes of this Act; provided that no funds shall be made available under this Act unless the office of

planning obtains matching funds from the private sector for fifty per cent of the cost of the feasibility and implementation plan.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on December 31, 2033.

Report Title:

Tourism; Green Fees; Feasibility Study

Description:

Requires the office of planning to conduct a feasibility study on assessing tourism green fees. Effective 12/31/33. (SD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

SB-2696-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2020 7:40:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/20/2020 1:00:00 PM

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sam Dorios	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Sam Dorios, and I am testifying in **support of SB2696, Relating to Green Fees.**

Hawai'i economy is deeply reliant on tourism. This can be a mixed bag – some do not like this – but it is a current truth. Until Hawai'i finds other means to sustain ourselves, we should ensure that tourism flourishes. Therefore it is important that we recognize another truth: tourists primarily come to Hawai'i in order to enjoy our natural environment.

We're in the middle of the Pacific Ocean; Hawai'i is not an easy (or cheap) place to visit. Most tourists are not coming here for the stores (though they will shop) or our food (though it's good). Some come to experience Hawaiian culture (which itself is tied to the 'Ā• ina), but by far most come in order to enjoy our beautiful oceans and landscapes. Plain and simple.

We therefore have an economic imperative to protect our environment. As it degrades and declines, so does our overall quality of life and the strength of our economy.

There are many things we can and should be doing to protect our fragile environment. And most of them require more funds than residents alone can burden. Given the impact so many tourists have on the islands, it is not unreasonable to ask that they help contribute to the protection of the islands – in fact, I imagine most wish to. Aloha is contagious; after visiting Hawai'i you want to protect its beauty for others too.

Questions of how do come up though. How much funding should be collected? How should it be collected? What will it be used for? How can we ensure it is managed correctly? And so on. I believe there are very good answers to this which can easily be discovered via the proposed study.

SB2696 is a balanced and focused approach. It seeks to engage all stakeholders, close the conservation gap, and hold us accountable for protecting the environment. It does not seek to cap tourism or diminish the tourist industry. On the contrary – it hopes to ensure tourism continues to flourish alongside our priceless natural environment.

I urge you to continue to prioritize the environment as it underpins every aspect of life and wellbeing on our islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

-Sam Dorios