

TOURISM LIAISON

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
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LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR
MARSHA WIENERT
TOURISM LIAISON

Statement of
MARSHA WIENERT
Tourism Liaison
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Friday, February 27, 2009
3:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

in consideration of
HB 1204 HD1
RELATING TO TOURISM.

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Members of the House Committee on Finance.

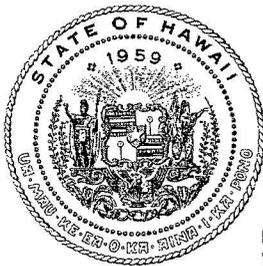
The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism appreciates the intent of HB 1204 HD1, which distributes an additional \$10 million in transient accommodations tax revenues to the tourism special fund in fiscal year 2009-2010 and fiscal year 2010-2011.

Hawai'i experienced a sharp decline in visitor arrivals and visitor spending in 2008, with visitor arrivals decreasing 10.8% to 6.8 million visitors. Visitor expenditures decreased \$1.8 billion, or 9.9%, to \$11.3 billion. These declines have had a huge effect on the state, as tourism plays such a large role in our economy and the health of the industry affects everything.

Increased tourism marketing and outreach is a part of the state's five-point economic sustainability plan. We view tourism marketing as an investment in the economy. It has been proven time and again that increased marketing is one of the quickest ways to get our economy back on its feet.

While we believe that these additional tourism special fund dollars are needed, the loss of revenue to the General Fund has not been taken into consideration in the Executive Biennium Budget. We do believe, however, that to stimulate our economy, additional marketing efforts need to be implemented. These marketing efforts will generate additional revenue through other taxes that benefit the general funds of the state.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on HB 1204 HD1.



LINDA LINGLE
Governor

LLOYD I. UNEBASAMI
Interim President and
Chief Executive Officer

Hawai'i Tourism Authority

Hawai'i Convention Center, 1801 Kalākaua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815
Website: www.hawaiitourismauthority.org

Telephone: (808) 973-2255
Fax: (808) 973-2253

Testimony of
Lloyd I. Unebasami
Interim President and Chief Executive Officer
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
on
H.B. 1204, H.D.1
Relating to Tourism

House Committee on Finance
Friday, February 27, 2009
3:00 p.m.
Conference Room 308

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) strongly supports H.B. 1204, H.D. 1, which proposes, for fiscal years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011, to provide an additional \$10 million in transient accommodations tax (TAT) to the Tourism Special Fund.

Since 2004, Hawai'i's visitor industry has reached record levels in terms of performance. In 2007, the latest data available for a full year, Hawai'i's visitor industry in Hawaii produced \$12.5 billion or 21.8 percent of the gross state product, accounted for 187,000 jobs or 21.4 percent of the total employment for the state and contributed \$1.29 billion tax dollars to the state and county government or 20.8 percent of total tax revenues. That was at a time when the industry was prospering and TAT revenues increasing as well. However, the economic crisis that has affected the nation and Hawai'i since 2008 and is still ongoing, has resulted in lower TAT collections and consequently, caused the HTA to revisit its \$88 million budget approved by the Legislature for the current fiscal year and plan for more realistic expenditures closer to \$71 million.

The additional revenues that H.B. 1204, H.D. 1 provides during these challenging times, will enable HTA to invest in programs under the Marketing, Access and Research & Planning Initiatives that will help to stimulate travel to Hawai'i and as a result, support Hawai'i's economy, help to sustain jobs and bring in tax revenues to state and county governments. Equally important are the other non-marketing initiatives outlined in the Hawai'i Tourism Strategic Plan (TSP) such as Hawaiian Culture, Natural Resources, Tourism Product Development, Workforce Development, Safety & Security and Communications & Outreach. All nine initiatives are needed to ensure a long-term and sustainable visitor industry.

We strongly support H.B. 1204, H.D. 1 and urge its passage. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

TESTIMONY BY GEORGINA K. KAWAMURA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
STATE OF HAWAII
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1204, H.D. 1

February 27, 2009

RELATING TO TOURISM

House Bill No. 1204, H.D. 1, amends Section 237D, Hawaii Revised Statutes, to deposit up to an additional \$10 million in transient accommodation tax revenues in Fiscal Year 2010 and Fiscal Year 2011 into the tourism special fund.

The Department of Budget and Finance opposes this bill. The bill will further reduce the amount of funds available for the State's General Fund. In light of the current fiscal crisis, we cannot afford to reduce the State's general fund balance.

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

JAMES R. AIONA, JR.
LT. GOVERNOR



KURT KAWAFUCHI
DIRECTOR OF TAXATION

SANDRA L. YAHIRO
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION
P.O. BOX 259
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

PHONE NO: (808) 587-1510
FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
TESTIMONY REGARDING HB 1204 HD 1
RELATING TO TOURISM**

TESTIFIER: KURT KAWAFUCHI, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION (OR DESIGNEE)

DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2009

TIME: 3PM

ROOM: 308

This bill amends section 237D-6.5(b) by requiring that certain transient accommodations tax revenue be deposited in the tourism special fund rather than the general fund.

The House Committee on Tourism, Culture & International Affairs amended the measure by defecting its effective date.

The Department of Taxation ("Department") **opposes this bill because of its implications on the general fund.**

The Department must be cognizant of the biennium budget and financial plan. This measure has not been factored into either. Given the forecasted decrease in revenue projections, this measure would add to the budget shortfall.

Assuming a current effective date, the Department estimates that this bill would result in a general fund revenue loss of \$10 million in both 2010 and 2011. The tourism special fund would see a \$10 million gain for both of those years.

TAXBILLSERVICE

126 Queen Street, Suite 304

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATIONS, Additional revenue for tourism special fund

BILL NUMBER: HB 1204, HD-1

INTRODUCED BY: House Committee on Tourism

BRIEF SUMMARY: Amends HRS section 237D-5.5 to repeal the provision that excess transient accommodations tax (TAT) revenues be deposited into the general fund. After all distributions of TAT revenues have been made, for fiscal year 2010 and fiscal 2011, \$10 million or all remaining TAT revenues, whichever is less, shall be deposited into the tourism special fund. If there are any remaining revenues, such revenues shall be deposited into the general fund.

Beginning in fiscal 2012, all remaining TAT revenues shall be deposited in the general fund.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2112

STAFF COMMENTS: The proposed measure would divert any excess TAT revenues, up to \$10 million that would normally be deposited into the state general fund in fiscal 2010 and fiscal 2011, into the tourism special fund.

The proposed measure clearly demonstrates the pitfalls of earmarking funds to fund specific programs. Be it a dollar amount or a percentage of some revenue resource, there is no way lawmakers can determine what the future needs or lack of needs may be. Appropriating the funds necessary insures not only that there will be sufficient funds, but there will be oversight and accountability for the expenditure of those funds. As an alternative to earmarking of TAT revenues, the legislature may wish to repeal the earmarking and utilize a direct appropriation approach in order to ensure adequate funding for the promotion of Hawaii as well as to ensure adequate funding for the convention center.

Digested 2/27/09



Representative Marcus Oshiro, Chair
Representative Marilyn Lee, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

HEARING Friday, February 27, 2009
 3:00 pm
 Agenda #6
 Conference Room 308
 State Capitol, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: HB1204, HD1, Relating to Tourism

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

Retail Merchants of Hawaii (RMH) is a not-for-profit trade organization representing 200 members and over 2,000 storefronts, and is committed to support the retail industry and business in general in Hawaii.

RMH supports HB1204, HD1, which requires, for fiscal year 2009-2010 and fiscal year 2010-2011 only, an additional distribution of not more than \$10,000,000 in transient accommodations tax revenues to the tourism special fund.

Tourism numbers are declining, both in arrivals (down 10.8% in 2008) and, more importantly, in spending (down 9.9%). The results of these declines are obvious: our tourism retailers continue to experience double-digit decreases in sales. Most that had expansion plans in the works have canceled them; some have just shut their doors. Layoffs and declines in job growth are an unfortunate consequence.

It is imperative that Hawaii INCREASE marketing outreach in order to regain marketshare and remain top of mind for travelers. While we do understand the fiscal needs of the state, we are convinced that increased marketing funding is an investment in our economy that will benefit not only retail, but also accommodations, attractions, and restaurants, and keep residents employed. The plus for the state is additional GET revenue deposited into the general fund.

We respectfully request that you pass HB1204, HD1 with an amendment to return the effective date to July 1, 2009. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carol Pregill'.

Carol Pregill, President

RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
1240 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 215
Honolulu, HI 96814
ph: 808-592-4200 / fax: 808-592-4202



Maui Hotel & Lodging
ASSOCIATION

Testimony of
Carol Reimann
Executive Director
Maui Hotel & Lodging Association
on
HB1204
Relating to Tourism

House Committee on Finance
Friday, February 27, 2009 – 3pm
Conference Room 308

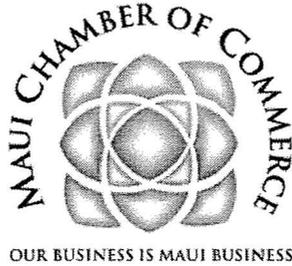
The Maui Hotel & Lodging Association (MHLA) is the legislative arm of Maui's Visitor Industry. Our membership includes approximately 120 property and allied business members – all of whom have an interest in the visitor industry.

MHLA supports HB1204 entitled Relating to Tourism. The additional distribution of \$10 million for fiscal years 2010 and 2011 to the tourism special fund will enable the Visitor Industry to remain viable via the investment of much needed marketing and funding of programs to stimulate travel to Hawaii. These funds will also support initiatives to improve the visitor experience.

Hawaii's visitor industry is the economic driver for the State. Funds invested in the tourism special fund will help to stimulate our economy, sustain jobs and bring in tax revenue during these tough economic times.

We humbly ask for your support of HB1204.

Thank you for your consideration.



**Testimony to the House Finance Committee
Conference Room 308, State Capitol
Friday, February 27, 2009; 3:00p.m.**

RE: HOUSE BILL NO. 1204 HD 1

Dear Chair Marcus Oshiro & Members of the Committee:

The Maui Chamber of Commerce, a business organization whose mission it is to advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics, supports HB 1204 HD1, relating to the Tourism Special Fund.

We are a membership driven organization comprised of over 900 members, 88% of which are small businesses with fewer than 25 employees, representing nearly 21,000 employees. We support this bill as it provides additional distribution of transient accommodations tax revenues to the tourism special fund in fiscal year 2009-2010 and fiscal year 2010-2011.

The Maui Chamber of Commerce understands the value and significance of the visitor industry and believes that more support and appreciation is needed for this industry which greatly contributes to our economy. We are in favor of measures that help to sustain and grow the visitor industry and enhance visitor experiences. Any decline in this sector harms all businesses, including small businesses that solely rely on tourism.

Therefore, we believe it is important to increase dollars to the visitor industry for marketing purposes to increase visitors, generate additional revenue, keep people employed, put others back to work, and benefit the overall economy.

For these reasons, the Maui Chamber of Commerce urges your support of HB 1204, HD1.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President



February 27, 2009

Hawaii State Capitol
House Committee on Finance
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

**TESTIMONY OF EDGAR GUM
GENERAL MANAGER
MARRIOTT'S KO OLINA BEACH CLUB**

RE: HB 1204 HD1 Relating to Tourism

Chairman Oshiro and members of the House Committee on Finance:

My name is Edgar Gum, General Manager of Marriott's Ko Olina Beach Club. Our resort is one of ten Marriott properties in the State of Hawaii that employs over 5,000 associates.

Marriott's Ko Olina Beach Club strongly supports HB 1204 HD1 Relating to Tourism. We support the additional distribution of Transient Accommodation Tax (TAT) revenue to the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) for fiscal years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

The recent decline in tourism has resulted in a reduction of TAT revenue. It is imperative for the HTA to continue to promote Hawaii as a travel destination and this bill would allow for those much needed funds.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.


Hilton
Grand Vacations
Asia Pacific Region

February 27, 2009

To: House Finance Committee
Rep. Marcus Oshiro, Chair

From: Bryan Klum, Executive Vice President
Hilton Grand Vacations, Asia/Pacific Region

Date: February 27, 2009
State Capitol Conference Room 308, 3 p.m.

Re: **HB 1204 HD1 Relating to Tourism**
Testimony in Support of the Bill

Chair Oshiro and Members of the Committee:

Hilton Grand Vacations is the timeshare division of Hilton Hotels Corporation and represents more than 800 employees in the State of Hawaii who work each day to create new owners and serve the guests staying in HGV's vacation ownership resorts on Oahu and the Big Island.

I speak in support of this bill, which would temporarily increase the amount of Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) revenue available to the Hawaii Tourism Authority for tourism promotion, particularly marketing.

I have had the pleasure and honor to work in the visitor industry in Hawaii for nearly 25 years and during that time, I have witnessed first-hand the impact of economic dislocations and world events on our tourism industry. Hawaii's visitor industry has always shown tremendous resilience in the face of adversity. This is due to the strong reputation Hawaii enjoys for its natural beauty and welcoming Aloha Spirit, as well as our State's long-term commitment to destination marketing.

The current global economic turmoil poses a major threat to Hawaii's visitor industry, far greater than anything we have faced since 9/11. If we are not able to arrest the continuing decline in visitor arrivals, the negative impact of this current crisis may be measured in years, not months.

Bryan Klum
Testimony (HB 1204 HD1)
Page 2

While the Hawaii "brand" remains strong, we need to reach out to travelers in North America and Asia and give them a reason to travel to our Islands now. To do this, the Hawaii Tourism Authority needs to increase spending on advertising, promotion and other retail marketing. Spending now, if directed appropriately, could stimulate travel to Hawaii in the 2nd half of 2009 and help stabilize visitor arrivals.

Allowing the Hawaii Tourism Authority access to a greater portion of the TAT revenue, even temporarily, would help mitigate the impact of the current economic turmoil on Hawaii's visitor industry and the citizens of our State.

Mahalo for this opportunity to offer testimony in support of this measure.



MAUI DIVERS
OF HAWAII

February 26, 2009

Representative Marcus Oshiro, Chair
Representative Marilyn Lee, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means

HEARING: Friday, February 27, 2009
3:00 p.m.
Agenda #6
Conference Room 308
State Capitol, Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: **HB1204, HD1, Relating to Tourism**

Chair Oshiro, Vice Chair Lee and Members of the Committee:

Our company has over 500 employees and has been in business in Hawaii for over 50 years. Over 90% of our business is dependent on the number of visitors coming to Hawaii. This is definitely the worse economic crisis that we have ever faced.

Maui Divers of Hawaii, Ltd. supports HB1204, HD1, which requires, for fiscal year 2009 - 2010 and fiscal 2010 - 2011 only, an additional distribution of not more than \$10,000,000 in transient accommodations tax revenues to the tourism special fund. We feel that it is very important that the tourism marketing budget be increased.

We respectfully request that you pass HB1204, HD1 with an amendment to return the effective date to July 1, 2009. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Taylor
President & CEO

RMT:asn



Travel should take you places®

**TESTIMONY OF JERRY GIBSON
AREA VICE PRESIDENT, HILTON HAWAII
February 27, 2009
RE: HB 1204 HD1 Relating to the Tourism**

Good afternoon Chairman Oshiro and members of the House Committee on Finance. Thank you for holding this hearing and allowing the members of the visitor industry to submit testimony to you.

Our Hilton Hawaii portfolio spans four islands: Oahu, Maui, Kauai and the Big Island and represents more than 7,000 hotel guest rooms and timeshare units. Our Hilton Hawaiian Village is the largest hotel in Hawaii with its 3,543 hotel and timeshare units.

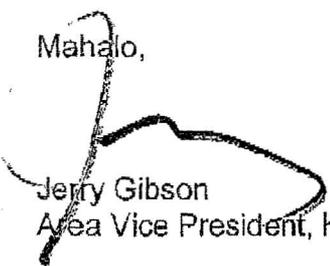
Hilton Hawaii strongly supports HB 1204 HD1 Relating Tourism. This bill would temporarily increase the amount of Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) revenue going to the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA).

In the years since the TAT was introduced, the residents of the State of Hawaii have benefited from the millions of dollars that the fund has provided. Unfortunately, as the occupancy levels have severely declined, so has the revenue generated from TAT. The downturn has necessitated even more marketing dollars to be spent to attract visitors to Hawaii. Additional funds are needed to provide HTA contractors the assets needed to market our product. We need to be visible in the marketplace.

The U.S. is being faced with the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. The only way Hawaii can recover is to regain our health in the visitor industry.

We urge you to support this bill and amend the effective date to July 1, 2009 or sooner.

Mahalo,


Jerry Gibson
Area Vice President, Hilton Hawaii

The New Otani
KAIMANA BEACH HOTEL

Executive Offices

**Testimony of J-P Cercillieux
E.V.P & General Manager
The New Otani Kaimana Beach Hotel**

February 27, 2009

RE : HB 1204 HD1 relating to tourism

Good afternoon, Chairman Oshiro and members of the House Committee on Finance. My name is JP Cercillieux , E.V.P & General Manager of the The New Otani Kaimana Beach Hotel.

We strongly support HB 1204 HD1 relating to Tourism. This bill would temporarily increase the amount of Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) revenue going to the Hawaii Tourism Authority. We believe this bill would provide increased funding to the HTA to further market Hawaii Tourism .

By increasing the amount of TAT revenue to HTA we are potentially increasing visitors arrival and securing workers jobs.

We strongly urge you to support this bill.

With best Aloha

**JP Cercillieux
EVP & General Manager
The New Otani Kaimana Beach Hotel**

On the Beach at Waikiki

*The New Otani Group of Hotels
Tokyo, Osaka, Makuhari, Los Angeles, Singapore, & Beijing*

2863 Kalakaua Avenue / Honolulu, Hawaii 96815 / Telephone: (808) 923-1555 / FAX: (808) 922-3404



February 25, 2009

House Finance Committee

Re: HB 1204, HD 1 (HSCR340)

Dear House Finance Committee Members:

HB 1204 is scheduled to go before the Committee on Finance on Friday, February 27, 2009 at 3:00 p.m.

I represent The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua and employ 650 ladies and gentlemen on this beautiful and magical Island of Maui.

HB 1204 is very important to Hawaii and its future. The additional funding of \$10,000,000 to the Tourism Special Fund is essential to keeping our employees employed. HB 1204 will allow us additional marketing dollars and the ability to increase marketing and generate revenue through increased visitors. With the current downturn in the economy, this is so very critical to us now. This would create jobs and put our people back to work!

Running a resort in Hawaii is much more costly than having one almost anywhere in the United States. The cost of doing business on Maui is tremendous and we need HB 1204 to assist us in bringing tourism to the Hawaiian Islands.

I know you have the best interests at heart for Hawaii, I appreciate your consideration for support of HB 1204.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Donovan
General Manager

TD/ps



**HAWAII HOTEL & LODGING
ASSOCIATION**

2270 Kalakaua Ave., Suite 1506
Honolulu, HI 96815
Phone: (808) 923-0407
Fax: (808) 924-3843
E-Mail: hhlh@hawaii-hotels.org
Website: www.hawaii-hotels.org



31st Anniversary
Are You Walking???
May 16, 2009
(Always the 3rd Saturday in May)
www.charitywalkhawaii.org

**TESTIMONY OF MURRAY TOWILL
PRESIDENT
HAWAII HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION**

February 27, 2009

RE: HB 1204 HD1 Relating to Tourism

Good afternoon Chairman Oshiro and members of the House Committee on Finance. I am Murray Towill, President of the Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association.

The Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association is a statewide association of hotels, condominiums, timeshare companies, management firms, suppliers, and other related firms and individuals. Our membership includes over 170 hotels representing over 47,300 rooms. Our hotel members range from the 2,523 rooms of the Hilton Hawaiian Village to the 4 rooms of the Bougainvillea Bed & Breakfast on the Big Island.

The Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association strongly supports HB 1204 HD1 Relating to Tourism. This bill would temporarily increase the amount of Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) revenue going to the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA). We believe this bill would provide increased funding to the HTA at a very critical time.

In recent years as tourism has prospered and TAT revenue increased, the HTA has been able to increase the funding for other activities included in their broad mandate. Unfortunately, the severe economic downturn we are facing is reducing the funds to the HTA due to the falling TAT revenue. The downturn has also increased the need for marketing. We must once again focus spending on marketing to stimulate our economic recovery. Additional funds would help the HTA and its contractors to be in the marketplace touting Hawaii's assets and the value of a Hawaii vacation. While many people are not traveling, many others are. We need to be reaching out to the traveling public promoting Hawaii.

In times like these, marketing is an investment that pays off in economic activity and tax revenues. Based on the Department of Business Economic Development & Tourism ("DBEDT") 2007 visitor numbers, each visitor generates about \$150 in tax revenue. At this level, every 6,700 visitors generate \$1 million in taxes. Increased marketing is one of the few options available in the near term to help keep people working and generate tax revenue.

Finally we ask you to amend the effective date to July 1, 2009.

We urge you to support this bill. Mahalo again for this opportunity to testify.

C L A S S I C R E S O R T S

February 25, 2009

Hawaii Finance Committee

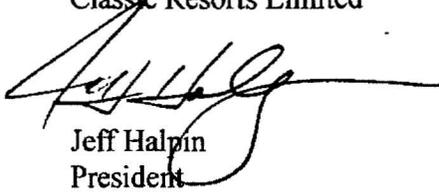
Subject: HB 960 HD1 & HB 1204 HD1

I am writing in support of the above mentioned bills as they would strengthen the marketing effort that is so critical in this economic environment.

Layoffs are becoming more prevalent in the visitor industry. Tax revenues to counties and the state are down because of declining visitor counts. Promoting tourism and increasing our marketing efforts are necessary to stem these trends.

Please strongly support the HB 960 HD1 and HB 1204 HD1. Thank you for considering my input.

Sincerely,
Classic Resorts Limited



Jeff Halpin
President

P.S. Classic Resorts employs over 250 people in the visitor industry.

STARWOOD

HOTELS & RESORTS WORLDWIDE, INC.

Keith Vieira
Senior Vice President, Director of Operations

February 25, 2009

To: House Committee on Tourism, Culture & International Affairs

Fr: Keith Vieira, Senior Vice President for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide

Re: HB1204, HD1 relating to TOURISM hearing on Friday February 27th, 2009 at 3:00pm at the State Capitol, Conference Room 308.

Aloha Chair Manahan and Members of the Committee:

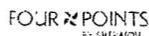
My name is Keith Vieira, Senior Vice President for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide. I am testifying on behalf of Starwood in support of HB 1204, relating Tourism.

HB 1204 will allocate a portion of the transient accommodations tax revenues to a special tourism fund in fiscal year 2009-2010 and fiscal year 2010-2011.

By dispersing the remaining revenues of \$10,000,000 or all remaining revenues, whichever amount is less, the tourism industry will have access to funds to increase marketing to generate revenue for one of Hawaii's largest industries. In the economic crisis that we are currently facing, this initiative will increase profits to Hawaii by escalating visitor arrivals, which in turn will maintain and even increase jobs in the state.

For these reasons, we respectfully request that this bill be accepted.

As always, I thank you for the opportunity to share our views on this matter.



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
25th LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION of 2009

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Representative Marcus Oshiro, Chair

2/27/09
3:00 PM – Room 306

HB 1204, HD 1
Relating to Tourism

Chair Oshiro and members of this Committee,

My name is Max Sword, here on behalf of Outrigger Hotels, to offer our support of this bill.

HB 1204 proposes to distribute additional funds into the tourism special funds, which we believe is needed for extra marketing efforts in the current campaign to boost tourism Statewide.

The proposed sunset dates will provide sufficient funds during that period or time, we believe, to provide the needed funds for the marketing effort.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify and we urge the passage of this bill.

Testimony of Doug Sears

HB 960 HD1 Relating to the Hawaii Tourism Authority: I SUPPORT THIS BILL - This measure would clarify that the Hawaii Tourism Authority's ("HTA") Emergency Trust Fund could be used to respond to an economic crisis. The existing \$5 million fund could be a valuable asset at times like this.

HB 1204 HD1 Relating to Tourism: I SUPPORT THIS BILL - This measure provides the opportunity to temporarily obtain additional funds for the HTA. These funds would greatly aid additional marketing efforts and help overcome our current economic problems.

HB 1763 HD1 Relating to Hawaii Tourism Authority: I OPPOSE THIS BILL - This measure would replace the HTA with a Department of Tourism. We believe this would be a step backward and reduce industry experts involvement in the decision making process. This is also the worst possible time to be making a change of this significance.

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2009 10:43 PM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: Toni@a3h.org
Subject: Testimony for HB1204 on 2/27/2009 3:00:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 2/27/2009 3:00:00 PM HB1204

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Toni Marie Davis
Organization: Activities & Attractions Association of Hawaii
Address: 1361 Makawao Ave Makawao, Hawaii 96768
Phone: 808-871-7947
E-mail: Toni@a3h.org
Submitted on: 2/26/2009

Comments:

Despite Hawaii's success, the tourism industry is still fragile. It is especially timely and important to support the marketing of tourism. Please support HTA and continue at least with level funding while providing additional funding through the Tourism emergency fund. With the struggling global economy, competition for visitors increases. Some of our longtime and most steadfast visitors are no longer choosing Hawaii. Now is NOT time for changes to our Tourism Authority funding or structure. Now is a time to sharpen pencils and work smarter!

FINTestimony

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2009 9:54 AM
To: FINTestimony
Cc: chris_resich@mcahawaii.com
Subject: Testimony for HB1204 on 2/27/2009 3:00:00 PM

Testimony for FIN 2/27/2009 3:00:00 PM HB1204

Conference room: 308
Testifier position: support
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Chris Resich
Organization: Individual
Address: 615 Piikoi St., #1000 Hnl., HI., 96814
Phone: 589-5516
E-mail: chris_resich@mcahawaii.com
Submitted on: 2/26/2009

Comments:

Aloha Members of the House Finance Committee,

I represent MCA, Inc., Hawaii's largest travel destination and event management company. We employ 175 associates and operate on all Islands.

I am writing in support of HB1204. In the current economic environment, in order to combat declining visitor numbers and ensure Hawaii is globally competitive, it is imperative to increase funding for the HTA. The visitor industry has proven in the past that given additional funding it will increase visitor arrivals and this will translate into more jobs and tax revenues.

Aloha,
Chris Resich
President, CEO
MCA, Inc.
615 Piikoi St., Suite 1000
Hnl., HI., 96814
808-589-5516
The Quality Leader in Destination Management - A Decade in Leading the DMC Industry