

LINDA LINGLE  
Governor

LLOYD I. UNEBASAMI  
Interim President and  
Chief Executive Officer

# Hawai'i Tourism Authority

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Testimony of  
**Lloyd Unebasami**  
Interim President and Chief Executive Officer  
Hawai'i Tourism Authority  
on  
**H.B. 1763**  
**Relating to the Hawaii Tourism Authority**

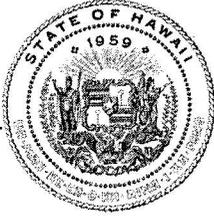
House Committee on Tourism, Culture & International Affairs  
Monday, February 9, 2009  
8:30 a.m.  
Conference Room 312

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) strongly opposes H.B. 1763 which proposes to establish a Department of Tourism and abolish the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. There are several points that we would like to point out:

- The HTA was established in 1998 based on the proposals made by the Economic Revitalization Task Force (ERTF) which concluded that in order to have a cohesive plan for Hawai'i's tourism industry, the State needed to have one entity responsible, and accountable for all aspects of tourism – policy development, marketing and market development, product development and impact monitoring. Since its existence, the HTA has performed the following:
  - Setting tourism policy and development from a statewide perspective;
  - Developing and implementing the state's tourism marketing plan and efforts;
  - Developing and monitoring implementation of the Hawai'i Tourism Strategic Plan (TSP);
  - Developing tourism programs with partners in the community, government and industry to sustain a healthy visitor industry; and
  - Coordinating tourism-related research, planning, promotional, and outreach activities with the public and private sectors.
- Furthermore, the ERTF recommended that a public-private board be established to assure that promotion dollars are effectively expended. The implementation of these recommendations and the operational efficiencies authorized by the Legislature since its creation have allowed the HTA to operate efficiently and effectively and function as the entity proposed by the ERTF.
- Section 9 of the bill voids all contractual obligations of the HTA upon its repeal. If enacted, this will have disastrous results for all of HTA's marketing, sports, and product development programs.

For these reasons we oppose H.B. 1763. Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

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LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR  
MARSHA WIENERT  
TOURISM LIAISON

## TOURISM LIAISON

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Statement of  
**MARSHA WIENERT**  
**Tourism Liaison**  
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism  
before the  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, CULTURE & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**  
Monday, February 9, 2009  
8:30 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

in consideration of  
**HB 1763**  
**RELATING TO THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY.**

Chair Manahan, Vice Chair Tokioka and Members of the House Committee on Tourism, Culture and International Affairs.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism has concerns with HB 1763, which repeals the Hawai'i Tourism Authority; establishes the department of tourism; transfers the convention center enterprise special fund, the tourism special fund, and the tourism emergency trust fund to the department of tourism; and renames the department of business, economic development, and tourism to the department of business and economic development.

While we believe that this proposal may have merit and should be discussed further, we are concerned with its timing. Due to our current tourism and economic challenges, we do not believe that now is the time to make these changes.

We would be willing to discuss this matter in the future, to determine its merit.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 1763.

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**HAWAII HOTEL & LODGING  
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31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary  
Are You Walking???  
May 16, 2009  
(Always the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May)  
[www.charitywalkhawaii.org](http://www.charitywalkhawaii.org)

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

**February 9, 2009**

**RE: HB 1763 Relating to the Hawaii Tourism Authority**

Good morning Chairman Manahan and members of the House Committee on Tourism, Cultural & International Affairs. I am Murray Towill, President of the Hawai'i Hotel & Lodging Association.

The Hawai'i 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 Hawai'i Hotel & Lodging Association opposes SB 1227 Relating to the Hawaii Tourism Authority. This bill would repeal the Hawaii Tourism Authority ("HTA") statute and replace it with a Department of Tourism. We do not support this change.

We support the existing HTA structure because it provides the opportunity for experienced industry professionals to be directly involved in the policy making and decision making process. Access to this experience is critical when setting policy for an industry critical to Hawaii's long-term economic health.

As we have seen in recent months, economic circumstances can change quickly. We are concerned that a Tourism Department will not have the flexibility or leadership to respond quickly and effectively.

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

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