

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY GEORGINA K. KAWAMURA  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
STATE OF HAWAII  
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, CULTURE, AND  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
ON  
HOUSE BILL NO. 649

February 7, 2009

RELATING TO NATURAL RESOURCES

House Bill No. 649 proposes to earmark an unspecified amount of funds for Department of Land and Natural Resources projects in east Maui.

The funds will be earmarked from the funds that the State Parks Division receives from the Tourism Special Fund. These funds are intended to be used for minor repairs and maintenance for facilities statewide.

The Department of Budget and Finance opposes this bill. These funds are intended to benefit all of the State Parks Division facilities, not a specific geographic area.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

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## TOURISM LIAISON

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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 TOURISM, CULTURE & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**  
Saturday, February 7, 2009  
9:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 312  
in consideration of  
**HB 649**  
**RELATING TO NATURAL RESOURCES.**

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 appreciates the intent of HB 649, which transfers funds from the tourism special fund for conservation and restoration projects in east Maui, but cannot support this bill.

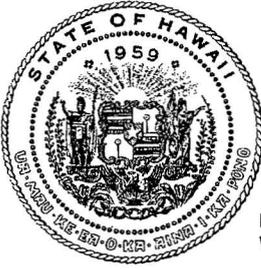
HB 649 increases the amount of tourism special funds from \$1 million to \$1.5 million that have to be used for natural resource parks and trails and adds that a portion of those dollars be used on east Maui projects for elimination of invasive species, restoration of instream flows, and additional DLNR conservation and resources enforcement positions.

We do not support the designation of tourism special funds for particular projects or programs because we firmly believe that it ties the hands of the tourism authority and its board to develop initiatives and appropriate funds based on priorities that have been established due to strategic plans and market and economic conditions of the time.

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Therefore, while we believe there is a need to protect our environment, we humbly ask that this bill be held and that you allow the authority's board to operate in the best interest of the people of Hawai'i and the visitor industry.

Thank you for allowing me to comment on HB 649.



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. 649**  
**Relating to Natural Resources**

House Committee on Tourism, Culture & International Affairs  
Saturday, February 7, 2009  
9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 312

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) strongly opposes H.B. 649 which provides for the transfer of transient accommodations tax (TAT) revenues from the Tourism Special Fund (TSF) to East Maui projects such as elimination of invasive species, restoration of instream flows, and conservation enforcement positions.

The HTA would like to provide the following information:

- The TSF was created to carry out the purposes in Chapter 201B, HRS which directs HTA to promote, market and develop the state's tourism industry as well as develop a long-range plan for tourism. As such, in 2004, the HTA, in collaboration with community, industry and government sectors, developed the Hawai'i Tourism Strategic Plan (TSP) which identifies nine initiatives needed to ensure a long-term and sustainable visitor industry: Access, Communications & Outreach, Hawaiian Culture, Marketing, Natural Resources, Research & Planning, Safety & Security, Tourism Product Development and Workforce Development. The TSP provides the overall framework upon which the HTA develops its programs and allocates resources for all of the nine initiatives within its annual budget.
- The Pest Inspection, Quarantine, and Eradication Fund was established for the eradication of pests that are detected. The Commission on Water Resource Management is responsible for the establishing the instream flow program and carrying out its programs with funds from the Water Resource Management Fund. Conservation and resources enforcement positions are funded by the Legislature under LNR405 from a variety of general, special, revolving, and federal funds. H.B. 649 seems primarily to serve as a means to provide funding for East Maui projects and there is no clear nexus between the source of funding and the programs.

The HTA believes that TAT revenues should not be diverted from its programs such as product development and marketing, which are important for Hawai'i in preserving and enhancing the visitor industry, which is the most significant driver of the state's economy. The HTA believes that H.B. 649 should be held. Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

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February 5, 2009

TO: Honorable Joey Manahan , Chair  
House Committee on Tourism, Culture and International Affairs

FROM: Bill Kauakea Medeiros  
Council Member, East Maui

SUBJECT: **Hearing of Saturday, February 7, 2009; Testimony in support of hb649, making an appropriation to control and eliminate invasive species and pests, properly manage streams and create more efficient enforcement of state law regarding conservation efforts in East Maui.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of this important measure. The purpose of this measure is provide funds from the tourism special fund to enable East Maui to eliminate invasive species, restore instream flows and provide resources for additional conservation personnel.

I support this measure for the following reasons:

1. The continued spread of Miconia has damaged the remote and hard to access rural watershed areas of East Maui and we must remain vigilant in its eradication.
2. The local residents have expressed concern over decreasing instream water flows and its detrimental effects on indigenous aquatic life, Taro cultivation and the possibility of fostering water born diseases.
3. Increased conservation personnel will be needed to implement state law in regulating activities in the sensitive East Maui natural environment.

For the foregoing reasons, I support this measure.

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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 7, 2009  
RE: HB 649 Relating to Natural Resources**

Good morning Chair Manahan and members of the House Committee on Tourism, Culture & International Affairs. 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 does not support HB 649 Relating to Natural Resources. This bill would mandate that the Hawaii Tourism Authority ("HTA") dedicate funds to the Department of Land & Natural Resources ("DLNR") for East Maui projects. While the proposed projects are desirable, we do not believe funding from the Tourism Special Fund should be earmarked for these projects.

Currently, \$2 million is provided to the DLNR and other organizations for natural resource enhancement. It seems appropriate for the identified activities to be evaluated in that funding process rather than mandate additional funds be set aside.

We are especially concerned about earmarking additional funds from the Tourism Fund due to the current economic crisis confronting Hawaii. Due to falling visitor arrivals and expenditures, HTA's revenue is falling and thus HTA's emphasis should be on seeking ways to stimulate the economy and attract additional visitors.

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

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