

LATE TESTIMONY

Lockers
Strollers
Carts**smarte** *carte*Smarte Carte, Inc.
4455 White Bear Parkway
St. Paul, MN 55110-7641
800-328-9006 • 612-429-3614
Fax 612-426-0927

Honorable Joey Manahan
Chair, Committee on Tourism, Culture and International Affairs
House of Representatives
State of Hawaii

Hearing: February 7, 2009

Re: HB 681—Relating to Transient Accommodations Tax

Chair Joey Manahan and Honorable Committee Members:

My name is Harvey Hee. I am the Area Manager for Smarte Carte operating out of the Honolulu, Kahului, Lihue, Hilo, and Kona Airports.

We offer testimony in support of the testimony submitted by the Airports Concessionaires Committee and value the greeters and training program because it promotes our island culture and the "Aloha Spirit" for our tourist. Airport travelers are better served by having such a unique and effective program of welcoming and thanking our visitors.

We support this bill as long as it in part provides funding for greeters and training at our public airports.

We believe that greeting travelers with island songs and hulas at our airports are vital for promoting tourism, sharing our aloha spirit and encouraging them to return again. This makes Hawaii unique and special especially in these dire economic times.

In addition, the program provides important training to our airport businesses and their employees who are in daily contact with these millions of tourist traveling through Hawaii's airports. It is important that they be trained in the Hawaiian ways of greeting as they assist the visitors at the airports.

Please ensure continued funding for this important program and that it is not eliminated from our airports.

Mahalo nui loa for allowing us this opportunity to offer this testimony.

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LATE TESTIMONY
Lockers
Suiters
Carts

smarte carte

Smarte Carte, Inc.
4455 White Bear Parkway
St. Paul, MN 55110-7641
800-328-9006 • 612-429-3614
Fax 612-426-0927
Hearing: February 9, 2009

Honorable Joseph Souki, Chair
Committee on Transportation
House of Representatives
State of Hawaii

RE: HB 1388 Relating to Airport Concessions

Chair Souki and Honorable Committee Members:

My name is Harvey Hee and I am the Area Manager with Smarte Carte Inc. operating out of the Hawaii Airports.

We support this bill and the testimony by the Airports Concessionaires Committee. Many reports say the current recession is worse than the terrorist events of September 11, 2001. Airport concessions are unique and difficult businesses to operate. Just as you sought to provide relief to airport concessions after the events of September 11, 2001 we again seek your support in obtaining relief.

Our business is presently down about 40%. Some concessions are not suffering like us since they have relief provisions in their airport agreements that we do not have.

We urge you to support this bill so airport concessions have fair relief options that allow them to survive and not close during these harsh economic times that are beyond our control. Closing an airport concession requires an airport concession to give up its performance bond and be barred from doing business with the State for five years. This is not good business and a replacement concession will most likely pay less rents to the State.

Please support this bill and keep it alive. We understand during the legislative process changes to the bill may have to be made.

Thank you for allowing us to testify.

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
25th LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION of 2009

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, CULTURE & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
Representative Joey Manahan, Chair

2/07/09
9:00 AM – Room 312

HB 981
Relating to Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT)

Chair Manahan and members of this Committee, my name is Max Sword, here on behalf of Outrigger Hotels, to comment on this bill.

We support the intent of this bill and support the efforts to maintain our product development, such as cultural events, etc.

However, in the current economic condition that we find ourselves in today, we need every penny we can get to market Hawaii in the global marketing arena, so that we fill the seats on the planes and beds full in the hotels.

With out seats on the planes, we will not be able to fill the hotels beds and in turn not be able to generate the TAT funds to do any product development.

We urge you to take that into consideration when deliberating on this bill.

SUNSET on the BEACH

To: Committee on Tourism, Culture
& International Affairs

Date: Feb. 7, 2009, Sat

Time: 9:00 AM

Place: #312 Conference Room
State Capitol

Janet Maduli
Waikiki Improvement Association
Event Coordinator

Bullet Points

- I have been the Event Coordinator since SOTB began in 2001 so my toes have been the sand ever since – and I can say without a doubt this is an experience totally unique to Hawaii!!
- Originally designed to help bring Economic Development back into Waikiki after 911... it has done exactly that!
- Sunset on the Beach is one of the most beautiful venues in the WORLD. Diamond Head on your Left, Waikiki Beach on your right, golden sunsets over the ocean.... it doesn't get any better then this AND ITS FREE!! To our visitors and residents alike.
- I have seen tourists from all over the world from Iraq, Japan, Canada, Australia etc... and the comment I'm asked frequently is... "Wow – what's going on.... Can we come? How much does it cost???" All are astonished when they are invited to come and join us. In addition, the next question is "How much does it cost?" When told "*it's free*" they are just amazed.
- In this day and age, movies have become a very expensive outing. Couples will spend over \$30.00 – so imagine the cost for family of 4 or more... SOTB provides a place where the entire ohana can come, throw the keiki in the ocean and let them play for a while, rinse off, then dig in and watch a blockbuster movie.
- A true event for the entire family as it is an ALCOHOL FREE EVENT!

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- Our visitors come and sit side by side, next to our local resident's and they get to *talk story and meet new friends*, so your vacation becomes a bit more memorable... it just adds to the overall experience.

FACTS

- Sunset on the Beach has screened over 264 films – but what is overlooked -we have become so much more than a Movie on the Beach. We have been able to turn the same footprint into:
 - A catwalk for a huge Fashion Show by Tamaris from Japan with a 100' ramp right on Waikiki Beach!
 - A World Premier for LOST several times over... where the red carpet has been rolled out on the sand and talk about press you should have seen the media.
 - Parade of Champions I, II and & III, where we used SOTB to celebrate our World Champions, Baseball, UH Football Team and our Olympians!
 - HIFF, The Hawaii International Film Festival – Brings in 180 Delegates who are officially accredited part of the who's who in the film world... and we made news in "THE HOLLYWOOD REPORTER" and in the same year we were in a special issue of "VARIETY" Magazine. PRICELESS advertising to say the least.
 - Japan Film "Life – Tears in Heaven" Premier
 - Figaro Magazine Story – Japan
 - Maui Writers Conference (2008)
 - Sunset on the Beach for Wounded Warriors
 - DON HO Memorial Service at SOTB – watched and reported around the world.

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- Entertainment – We have had brand new groups looking for a way to be heard and to hone their craft....
And many of the legends in the Hawaiian Music Industry come and perform free – to give back – to our audiences – from Jake Shimabukuro, C&K, Hapa, The Brothers Cazimero, and Eddie Kamai.
- Many cultural performances have been staged at SOTB from Korean, Japanese, Capoeira, Filipino – and even the all American Pro Bowl Cheerleaders!
- We have helped various Restaurants – to stay afloat – be seen and advertise.
- We have been able to help non profit organizations get their word out, from The Bone Marrow Registry - to the Humane Society – Malama Hawaii to name a few.

Sunset on the Beach is a one of kind event, unique to Hawaii, which is able to change and become so much more than a Movie on the beach. It has become part of the Hawai`i experience for many visitors and our local families as well.



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Testimony of
Wayne Kaho'onei Panoke
Executive Director
'Ilio'ulaokalani Coalition

LATE TESTIMONY

On
H.B. 681
Relating to the Transient Accommodations Tax

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

'Ilio'ulaokalani Coalition, comprised of cultural practitioners and Kumu Hula throughout the State of Hawai'i supports the intent of H.B. 681 which requires a percentage of the transient accommodations tax (TAT) to be used for tourism product development.

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Club's annual Prince Kuhio Celebration has benefited from HTA's product development funds for the past six years. Through this financial support, we have been able to provide a number of cultural events free to the public, that include the Native Hawaiian Health & Ho'ike'ike Festival; Pualeilani Festival of the Arts (hula, mele and crafts at the Royal Hawaiian Center), Prince Kuhio Parade through Waikiki followed by the free Moonlight Concert featuring some of our finest musicians. All of these events are open to the public and marketed in visitor publications to encourage visitors to experience the local culture, free of charge.

The Prince Kuhio Celebration is one of three "Signature" events proclaimed by Legislative Resolution. The other two events are Aloha Week Festivals and the King Kamehameha Celebration. These events each year applies for the product development grant from HTA. The funds that are provided through these grants allows us to produce cultural events for our ohana here in Hawaii and the visitors. Let me point out, that the amount of funds that are provided through these grants, are not sufficient. However, it provides us with a financial base that than qualifies us to secure grants through other programs.

I would advocate to have HTA continue to provide this funding through the current process. It is extremely important that the product development funds be used for exactly that, and not be reduced in any way to make up for marketing of these beautiful islands.

I urge this committee to do the pono thing, and vote to support H.B. 681. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me for further discussion.

Mahalo for hearing this bill.

Na'u me ke aloha,

Wayne Kahoonei Panoke
Executive Director
'Ilio'ula okalani Coalition

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LATE TESTIMONY

Peter Apo
Board Member, Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association
President, The Peter Apo Company, LLC

[REDACTED]

House Committee on Tourism, Culture, & International Affairs

February 7, 2009
9:00 a.m.

HB 681 RELATING TO THE TRANSIENT ACCOMODATIONS TAX

Chairman Manahan & Members of the Committee:

I support HB 681 as a resounding acknowledgement of the public policy genius of the Tourism Strategic Plan (TSP) and those strategic initiatives that usually lie in the shadow of the marketing initiative. I laud the TSP and the inclusive process by which it was created as a public policy document fashioned directly by the people of Hawai'i. It is a profound road map that meets the challenges of sustainable industry growth and for the first time in our tourism history articulated a plan by which to deal with the love-hate relationship the people of Hawai'i have with tourism.

I understand that while the language of the HB 681 amendment specifically states "tourism product development" as the purpose for which an unspecified amount of funds be set aside you may want to clarify that the bill is not meant to limit the use of such funds to the specific TSP Initiative identified as Tourism Product Development and that other initiatives such as Hawaiian Culture are included in your purpose.

Many years ago we made a painful transition in tourism policy when we replaced the Hawai'i Visitors Bureau (the ancestor of the HTA and totally marketing-centric) with the Hawai'i Tourism Authority which was intended to bring a holistic approach to the sustainable growth of the industry by establishing measures of success that extended beyond job quantification and profit. With the TSP we succeeded in crafting all the right words and put in place several key initiatives that address product development – sometimes in oblique ways – but in ways that truly begin to connect Hawai'i's people with industry opportunities that were heretofore out of their reach. But, the broader public policies reflected in the TSP are only as good as the resources we are willing to consistently commit to carry out the policy. The fact that the board of HTA is composed primarily of tourism professionals from the hotel, airline, and marketing professions creates a behavior expectation that the lion's share of the budget, particularly during low visitor count periods, will be committed to marketing - sometimes at the expense of the other initiatives. HB 681 would level the playing field and insure that all of the public policy objectives of the TSP receive equal attention.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 681.

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Acknowledgements

The Hawaii Tourism Authority wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to all of the individuals listed below who contributed to the formulation of the Hawai'i Tourism Strategic Plan: 2005-2015. We would especially like to thank those who attended the public meetings or otherwise provided comment, suggestions and assistance. There are probably many others that we have failed to mention and to those persons, we humbly apologize. To all, *Mahalo Nui Loa*.

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000111

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Charlian Wright
Ave Wright-McIntosh
Harry Yada
R. J. Yahiku
Kelly Yamanouchi
Neal Yokota
Laurie Yoshida
JoAnn Yukimura
Diane Zachary

RESEARCH EFFORTS

John Knox, John M. Knox & Associates, Inc.
Joseph Toy, Hospitality Advisors LLC

PBR HAWAII

Frank Brandt
Vincent Shigekuni
Lacey Kazama
Brad Nakamura
Kathy Bryant-Hunter



The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
923 Nu'uuanu Avenue
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96817

Tel (808) 537-4508
Fax (808) 545-2019

nature.org/hawaii

Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting H.B. 681 Relating to the Transient Accommodations Tax
House Committee on Tourism, Culture & International Affairs
Saturday, February 7, 2009, 9:00am, Rm. 312

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of Hawaii's native plants, animals, and ecosystems. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands for native species in Hawai'i. Today, we actively manage more than 32,000 acres in 11 nature preserves on O'ahu, Maui, Hawai'i, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaua'i. We also work closely with government agencies, private parties and communities on cooperative land and marine management projects.

The Nature Conservancy supports H.B. 681.

While the Hawai'i Tourism Authority plans and spends additional funds for tourism marketing in these tough economic times, it is essential that it take into account and balance the importance of investing in the care of the actual product that is being marketed. Virtually every advertisement and website marketing tourism in Hawai'i features images of Hawaii's stunning natural beauty and unique culture, which we have used for decades to entice visitors to these uniquely precious but fragile islands.

Studies and statistics indicate that, now more than ever, travelers are craving enhanced and authentic environmental and cultural experiences in the places they visit. They are seeking more and better opportunities to have a direct connection to the natural resources, people, and history of the places they visit. Indeed, this provides an opportunity for a more meaningful visitor experience. However, it is also pushing our guests in greater numbers into rural communities and native ecosystems that may not have the capacity to accommodate them in a way that is mutually beneficial to visitor, resident and ecology. In the best cases, we see visitors come away with a deeper appreciation for Hawai'i, a desire to return, and an enthusiasm they will share with family, friends and colleagues. In the worst cases, we see things like resting dolphins and sea turtles harassed at Kealakekua Bay, and historical sites at 'Ahihi-Kina'u Natural Area Reserve literally used as a toilet.

Over the last several years, the Hawai'i Tourism Authority's natural resource, product enrichment, and cultural programs have done a very good job of simultaneously enhancing the visitor experience, improving the condition of the environment, and building greater understanding and partnerships across local communities. The HTA natural resources program has improved access, signage and facilities at natural resource sites; developed educational materials; improved trails; funded community-based ranger programs that educate both visitor and resident alike; and supported invasive species control and native plant restoration.

The Nature Conservancy appreciates the importance of engaging in the necessary marketing to keep visitors coming to Hawai'i, particularly during difficult times when they may have other more economical travel choices. However, part of keeping visitors coming back and recommending Hawai'i to others is ensuring that they get the experience that was marketed to them—a globally unique and healthy natural environment, and a rich and vibrant host culture.

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000110



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Tel: 808.596.8155/800.709.2642 • Fax: 808.596.8156/800.710.2642

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STATE TESTIMONY

Testimony in Support of HB 681

Attention: House of Representatives, Committee on Tourism, Culture
& International Affairs
Representative Joey Manahan, Chair
Representative James Kunane Tokioka, Vice Chair

From: Robin Puanani Danner, President & CEO
Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement
1050 Queen Street, Suite 200
Honolulu, HI 96814

RE: **Testimony in Support of HB 681**
Saturday, February 7, 2009 at 9:00am at the State Capitol, Conference Room 312

Aloha Committee on Tourism, Culture & International Affairs, Chair Manahan and Vice Chair Tokioka:

The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) strongly supports HB 681, which will allow a percentage of the Transient Accommodations Tax to directly fund tourism product development. The Hawai'i Tourism Authority's (HTA) Tourism Product Development supports a number of key programs and initiatives as part of the Tourism Strategic Plan (TSP). The Hawaiian Culture Initiative (HCI), the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, and events such as the Merrie Monarch and the Keep It Hawaii awards are supported by the TSP. HTA was established in 1998 to promote and market Hawaii as a visitor destination, and the Authority continues to succeed in their efforts by collaborating with non-profit and community organizations to implement programs and services. HB 681 will provide measured funding to continue the HCI and the numerous programs and projects that encompass it.

CNHA, a non-profit organization with a mission to promote the cultural, economic and community development of Native Hawaiians, has collaborated with HTA to provide support and administration for twenty community projects under the HTA's Kūkulu Ola Living Hawaiian Culture Program. Through this program, CNHA provided training to over 400 participants representing 263 organizations at 10 statewide workshops. Projects were funded throughout the state from Anahola to Kohala to support events at Puuhonua O Honaunau, where visitors interacted with practitioners; lomilomi workshops in Waikiki for visitors and locals to interact and learn; and the development of a Hawaiian Cultural Resource Directory. Community projects like these strengthen the relationship between the visitor industry and the Hawaiian community; create authentic visitor experiences, activities and marketing programs; and support cultural practitioners and artisans to perpetuate the Hawaiian culture.

As a Native Hawaiian organization promoting cultural, economic and community development, CNHA understands the economic challenges that our state and communities are currently facing.

By sustaining tourism product development and the Hawaiian Culture Initiative, we can ensure that Hawaii maintains its unique and special sense of place for kamaaina and malihini alike.

We can ensure Hawaii's appeal by supporting genuine products, programs and projects that will distinguish Hawaii from other tourist destinations and continue to attract visitors today and after the economic downturn. Our support for HB 681 and the Hawaiian Culture Initiative safeguards the goals of HTA, the TSP and our culture. We urge you to pass HB 681.

Amy Luke

From: Carol Yotsuda [redacted]
Sent: Friday, February 06, 2009 5:59 PM
To: TCtestimony
Subject: House Bill No. 681 (HB681)

LIFE TESTIMONY

February 6, 2009, 5:50 pm

To: Representative Joey Manahan, Chair
House Committee on Tourism, Culture & International Affairs

From: Carol Kouchi Yotsuda, President & Executive Director Garden Island Arts Council

Re: HB681, Feb 7, 2009, 9:00 am (5 copies)

I received word of this bill at 5:20 p.m. Friday, so it will not make the 9:00 a.m. Friday deadline for testimony, but because of the importance and impact of this measure on many of our art and culture programs and to the recipients of our programs, I am writing anyway. Please consider this.

Two of our (GIAC) most publicly acclaimed and appreciated product enrichment programs funded through the HTA and Kauai County product enrichment funds are the E Kanikapila Kakou Hawaiian Music program, now in its 26th year, and the Lihue Airport Window Display program which, although relatively new, reaps tremendous positive feedback from both residents and visitors alike.

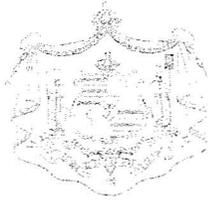
Both these programs and many of the other great events put on by other non-profits and funded by this same source of revenue are the most powerful marketing tools that Kauai (and the State of Hawaii) has to sell the Hawaii that visitors are seeking when they come to the islands.

If product enhancement funding is lost and many of the attractive programs are lost, there will be that much less to market to the visitors. Festivals, greeting programs, art and cultural events, natural resources sell themselves so marketing is already inherent in these programs.

You are getting double your money's investment when you put funding into product enrichment programs.

It is totally an unwise move to stop funding them. Why add an army of unpaid volunteers to the army of unemployed....too many people with nothing to do can spell big trouble.

(s) Carol Kouchi Yotsuda



Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs
P. O. Box 1135
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96807

TESTIMONY OF LEIMOMI KHAN, PRESIDENT
REGARDING HOUSE BILL 681

RELATING TO THE TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATIONS TAX

Committee on Tourism, Culture & International Affairs

Hearing date and time: February 07, 2009 9:00 a.m.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 681, which leaves unspecified the amount of money to be allocated to the tourism special fund from the transient accommodations tax for tourism product development.

The Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs would like to cite important work that has been supported by tourism product development funds and to urge this Committee's support for continued adequate funding.

Product development monies fund the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association, whose mission is to perpetuate an authentic spirit of aloha and Hawaiian culture in the hospitality industry's planning, promotion and product development processes. NaHHA services corporate and community initiatives through project management, consulting, training and facilitation.

As one of nine initiatives of the Hawai'i Tourism Strategic Plan 2005-2015, the Hawaiian Culture Initiative that resulted in creation of NaHHA has been, from a Hawaiian community perspective, a jewel and cornerstone, recognized for its culturally astute, earnest and outstanding efforts at building and shoring up collaborative bridges between the host culture and the industry.

The Association and many other prominent native organizations and individuals have participated in NaHHA conferences and smaller stakeholder meetings to help guide its actions in fulfillment of the Hawai'i Tourism Strategic Plan. The Association is unaware of any other initiative, as long as tourism has been Hawai'i's foremost economic engine, that has so successfully engaged all stakeholders to strengthen our common and intrinsic aloha for Hawai'i and for one another, and to translate into action our deeply-held traditions for welcoming and honoring guests and visitors.

Tourism product development monies have also funded the Prince Kuhio Festivals, for which the Association has been extremely grateful. Prince Jonah Kalaniana'ole Kuhio was a great Hawaiian patriot and statesman who served as Delegate to Congress and is credited as founder of the Hawaiian Home Lands program in 1920 as

well as the Civic Club movement around 1917. The federal building is named for Prince Kuhio, and through the Prince Kuhio Festivals, which includes a parade and many other cultural activities, our Hawaiian homestead communities and members of the civic clubs have the opportunity to demonstrate our continuing respect and aloha for this great man, and to share this knowledge and aloha with our visitors.

By way of background, the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs is a growing national confederation of fifty-three Hawaiian Civic Clubs, located throughout the State of Hawai'i and in the States of Alaska, California, Colorado, Illinois, Nevada, Utah, Virginia and Washington State. It initiates and works to support actions that enhance the civic, economic, educational, health and social welfare of our communities, and in particular, the culture and welfare of the Native Hawaiian community.

We urge this Committee's support of adequate funding for tourism product development and thank you for this opportunity to testify on House Bill 681.