

Amy Luke

From: mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov
Sent: Monday, March 16, 2009 8:13 AM
To: TCItestimony
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Testimony for SB1226 on 3/16/2009 8:30:00 AM

Testimony for TCI 3/16/2009 8:30:00 AM SB1226

Conference room: 312
Testifier position: oppose
Testifier will be present: No
Submitted by: Karen Chun
Organization: Individual
Address: [REDACTED]
Phone: [REDACTED]
E-mail: [REDACTED]
Submitted on: 3/16/2009

LATE TESTIMONY

Comments:

This bill is a special interest bill that seeks to REMOVE state and local rights. There is no need for this bill since any laws concerning GMO regulation or labeling can be voted up or down by you folks and/or our County Councils.

So this bill is simply an end run around local rule by Monsanto in order to sneakily eliminate the possibility of the majority of Hawai'i legislators passing a law in the future.

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LATE TESTIMONY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
25th LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION of 2009

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

3/16/09
8:30 AM

SB 1226, SD 2
Relating to Tourism Special Fund

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

We support the intent of this bill, if the intent is to increase the percentage allocated to tourism marketing.

One of the 2 largest income sectors for the State, Tourism, is in need of funds to promote.

Unlike the other large sector, federal government or military, we cannot print money or levy taxes to get the monies to promote and market Hawaii.

We urge that the percentage be increased.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify.

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LATE TESTIMONY

Maui Hotel & Lodging

ASSOCIATION

Testimony of

Carol Reimann

Executive Director

Maui Hotel & Lodging Association

on

SB1226

Relating to the Tourism Special Fund

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, CULTURE, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Monday, March 16, 2009 – 8:30am

Conference Room 312

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 has concerns in regard to SB1226 entitled Relating to the Tourism Special Fund. We are concerned that there is a blank percent. We believe that 34.2% should be reinstated at the very least and consideration be given to an increased percentage because of the need to increase marketing during these tough economic times.

Tourism is the economic engine for Hawaii. Increased marketing is critical to assist us in our recovery process and will be of benefit to many residents in Hawaii.

We humbly ask for your reassessment of SB1226.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carol Reimann
Executive Director



Testimony to the House Committee on Tourism, Culture, & International Affairs
Conference Room 312, State Capitol
Monday, March 16, 2009; 8:30 a.m.

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 1226 SD2, RELATING TO THE TOURISM SPECIAL FUND

Chair Manahan, Vice Chair Tokioka, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii does not support SB 1226 SD2, relating to the Tourism Special Fund in its current form.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,100 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. 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.

This measure removes the per cent of transient accommodations tax that is deposited into the tourism special fund from 34.2 per cent to a blank per cent. .

The Chamber understands the value and significance of the tourism industry to Hawaii's economy. Any decline in this sector harms all businesses, including small businesses that solely rely on tourism. Unfortunately, this is the current situation as Hawaii weathers a tough economic storm. Therefore, we believe that reducing the funds to the HTA is not the most effective course of action. This is a time when Hawaii needs to pursue marketing opportunities in order to revitalize and rebuild the industry, so that jobs can be restored and the economy back to normalcy.

The Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests that the committee restore the percentage of TAT going into the HTA to at least 34.2%.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments.

TAXBILLSERVICE

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TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

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SUBJECT: TRANSIENT ACCOMMODATIONS, Disposition of revenue

BILL NUMBER: SB 1226, SD-2

INTRODUCED BY: Senate Committee on Ways and Means

BRIEF SUMMARY: Amends HRS section 237D-6.5(b)(2) to reduce the percentage of revenues deposited into the tourism special fund from 34.2.6% to ____.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2090

STAFF COMMENTS: The legislature by Act 156, SLH 1998, increased the transient accommodations tax rate to 7.25% effective January 1, 1999. It should be remembered that the TAT rate was increased as a means of covering the debt service for the convention center and to provide a dependable stream of funding for the visitor industry. The deal that was struck designated 37.9% of the TAT collections to be put into the promotion fund (tourism special fund).

The legislature by Act 250, SLH 2002, established a TAT trust fund into which 5.3% of all TAT collections were to be deposited. The Act also limited the amount of revenue in the convention center enterprise special fund to \$31,000,000 and reduced the amount earmarked for the tourism special fund from 37.9% to 32.6%. It also provided that when revenues in the tourism special fund exceeded \$62,292,000, any excess in that amount was to be transferred to the general fund.

The legislature by Act 235, SLH 2005, increased the percentage of revenue deposited into the tourism special fund from 32.6% to 34.2%, provided that of the first \$1 million deposited into the tourism special fund, 90% shall be deposited into the state parks special fund and 10% deposited into the special land and development fund established for the Hawaii statewide trail and access program, and 0.5% of the 34.2% shall be deposited into a sub-account of the tourism special fund to provide funding for a safety and security budget.

The proposed measure would reduce the amount deposited into the tourism special fund from 34.2% to ____%. The percentage change in the amounts deposited into the tourism special fund 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.

Since any funds in excess of those specifically earmarked under this section of the TAT law accrue the general fund, this measure amounts to nothing more than a raid of TAT revenues to shore up the general

LATE TESTIMONY

SB 1226, SD-2 - Continued

fund in this time of shrinking revenues. This is not the commitment made by the 1998 legislature when it raised the TAT rate to its current level. Given the importance of the visitor industry to Hawaii's economy, all possible resources should be made available for the purpose of promoting the industry and attracting visitors to Hawaii.

As a footnote, lawmakers should review all of the directives they have adopted about the proceeds of the TAT as to how they are to be used. This amounts to nothing more than micro-managing what should otherwise be an autonomous operation so long as the convention center authority and tourism authority meet the state outcomes.

Digested 3/16/09

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Amy Luke

From: Kurt [kakamine@ohanapacific.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 03, 2009 5:43 PM
To: Rep. James Tokioka
Subject: Thank You!!

LATE

Jimmy,

Thank you very much for chatting with us today. I appreciate your courage and boldness in supporting principle. I can tell you that the business community appreciate all that you do and I will personally ensure that we provide this community and our membership information on your support.

kurt

Kurt Akamine

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