

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 271, SD 2

Relating to Tourism Emergency

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

This bill proposes to clarify the definition of what a tourism emergency is, by including "economic disaster" in that definition.

This change would allow the HTA to access those funds now, because we are in an economic disaster.

We urge that you pass out this bill and mahalo for allowing me to testify.

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STATE TESTIMONY

Maui Hotel & Lodging
ASSOCIATION

Testimony of
Carol Reimann
Executive Director
Maui Hotel & Lodging Association
on
SB271 SD2
Relating to Tourism Emergency

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, CULTURE, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
Monday, March 16, 2009 – 8:30am
Conference Room 312

I represent the Maui Hotel & Lodging Association (MHLA) – our membership includes approximately 120 property and allied business members – all of whom have an interest in the visitor industry. Collectively, the visitor industry employs nearly 40% of Maui county residents.

MHLA supports SB271 SD2 entitled Relating to Tourism Emergency. We believe that accessing the Tourism Emergency Fund during an economic crisis is an appropriate use of the fund; and that the funds would be put to good use to help us during these tough economic times. We also support the inclusion of a requirement from the governor declaring of the existence of a tourism emergency and the governor's express approval and direction before action may be taken.

There is no doubt that the visitor industry has taken a hard hit since the airline crisis early last year and the subsequent economic downfall felt across the nation. As the driving economic engine for Hawaii, the decline of tourism has negatively affected many other industries, lives, businesses and jobs. Accessing these funds is critical to assist us in our recovery process and will be of benefit to many residents in Hawaii.

We ask for your support of SB271 SD2.

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. 271 SD2, RELATING TO TOURISM EMERGENCY

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

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii supports SB 271 SD2, relating to Tourism Emergency.

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 adds a national or global economic crisis to situations considered a tourism emergency and requires, in addition to the governor's declaration of the existence of a tourism emergency, the governor's express approval and direction before action may be taken.

The Chamber, through its Tourism Committee, encourages a broad base of understanding, support and appreciation for the Tourism and Travel Industries within the business community, Legislature and the general public. The committee also supports visitor industry growth and improvement while working to enhance the visitor experience.

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.

As a result, the Chamber believes it is critical to respond to emergency situations on a timely basis to offset the impact on the industry. This bill will provide a mechanism to address emergency situations, thus mitigating potential negative outcomes.

The Chamber of Commerce, therefore, supports SB 271, SD2 and urges the committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments.