



HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM
A S S O C I A T I O N

Testimony of George Szigeti
President & CEO

HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM ASSOCIATION
Senate Committee on Tourism & International Affairs
Hearing on April 15, 2015, 2:45 P.M.

GM 827 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee, GERALD L. DE MELLO, for a term to expire 6-30-2018.

Dear Chair Kahele, Vice Chair English, and Members of the Committee. My name is George Szigeti and I am the President and CEO of the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association.

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) is a statewide association of hotels, condominiums, timeshare companies, management firms, suppliers, and other related firms that benefit from and strengthen Hawai'i's visitor industry. Our membership includes over 150 lodging properties, representing over 50,000 rooms, and over 400 other Allied members. The visitor industry was responsible for generating \$14.9 billion in visitor spending in 2014 and supported 170,000 jobs statewide – we represent one of Hawai'i's largest industries and a critical sector of the economy.

On behalf of the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association, I respectfully submit this testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of the nomination of Mr. Gerald L. De Mello and ask that you confirm his nomination to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

As Hawai'i's State tourism agency the Hawai'i Tourism Authority is critical to Hawai'i's continued success in the tourism market. In order to remain successful HTA needs representatives like Mr. Gerald L. De Mello who's experience in bridging the public and private sectors for the purpose of community growth, is an invaluable asset to the HTA Board.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.