

JAN 23 2026

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO TOURISM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 27, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
2 by adding a new section to be appropriately designated and to
3 read as follows:

4 "§27- Tourism liaison officer; established. (a) There
5 is established within the office of the governor a tourism
6 liaison officer who shall be appointed by the governor without
7 regard to section 26-34. The tourism liaison officer shall not
8 be subject to chapters 76 and 89. Notwithstanding section
9 76-16(b) (17), the exemption from chapter 76 shall not expire.

10 (b) The duties of the tourism liaison officer shall
11 include but not be limited to:

12 (1) Serving as the liaison of the governor with the Hawaii
13 tourism authority; department of business, economic
14 development, and tourism; and other public and private
15 parties on matters relating to tourism;

16 (2) Advising the governor on matters relating to the
17 State's long-term tourism strategy;



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1 (3) Developing the governor's legislative package on
2 measures relating to tourism;

3 (4) Defining and implementing performance measures for the
4 Hawaii tourism authority;

5 (5) Coordinating investments that serve the tourism
6 industry and the community at large;

7 (6) Establishing international relationships and
8 strengthening existing relationships with Asia-Pacific
9 partners;

10 (7) Developing and implementing statewide destination
11 management and regenerative tourism efforts and
12 programs, including:

13 (A) Developing and annually updating a strategic
14 tourism management plan that advances tourism in
15 the State, complies with destination management
16 best practices, and promotes regenerative
17 tourism; and

18 (B) Developing measures of effectiveness to assess
19 the overall benefits and effectiveness of the
20 strategic tourism management plan;



1 (8) Developing destination management action plans for
2 each county;

3 (9) Maintaining records documenting the progress and
4 effectiveness of the strategic tourism management plan
5 and relevant programs implemented; and

6 (10) Performing other functions to facilitate the purpose
7 of this section.

8 (c) In carrying out the duties under this section, the
9 tourism liaison officer:

10 (1) May utilize the services of the State's tourism
11 agencies, including those of the Hawaii tourism
12 authority, as appropriate;

13 (2) May enter into contracts and agreements relating to:

14 (A) Destination management;

15 (B) Regenerative tourism; and

16 (C) Tourism research and statistics to provide
17 tourism information on the effects of the
18 strategic tourism management programs on the
19 measures of effectiveness developed pursuant to
20 subsection (b) (7) (B);



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1 provided that the tourism liaison officer shall
2 periodically submit a report of the contracts and
3 agreements entered into by the tourism liaison officer
4 to the governor, speaker of the house of
5 representatives, and president of the senate;

6 (3) Shall seek and utilize any available funding sources,
7 including grant moneys; and

8 (4) May engage in any and all other activities necessary
9 to carry out the intent of this section.

10 (d) To meet the destination management objectives for each
11 county, the tourism liaison officer shall perform the actions
12 specified in each of the following plans:

13 (1) Oahu destination management action plan;

14 (2) Maui nui destination management action plan;

15 (3) Hawaii island destination management action plan; and

16 (4) Kauai destination management action plan,

17 during the specified phases; provided that the execution of each
18 destination management action plan shall be dependent on the
19 cooperation and participation of the applicable state or county
20 agency.

21 (e) For the purposes of this section:



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"Destination management" means a collaborative and coordinated process with public, private, and community stakeholders to manage the various elements of a visitor destination to:

(1) Create, implement, and monitor strategies that attract targeted visitor markets and improve visitor experiences;

(2) Improve natural and cultural resources valued by Hawaii residents and visitors;

(3) Develop and maintain tourism-related infrastructure to prevent overcrowding and overtaking sites and resources; and

(4) Ensure that the provision of services enhances the visitor experience.

"Regenerative tourism" means a tourism model that:

(1) Is designed and carefully managed to bring net benefits to local communities and destinations; and

(2) Implements an innovative and sustainable economic development plan to:

(A) Make net positive contributions;



- 1 (B) Create conditions that allow communities to
- 2 flourish;
- 3 (C) Engage in collaborative efforts that provide
- 4 visitors with genuine and meaningful experiences
- 5 in Hawaii; and
- 6 (D) Improve destinations for current and future
- 7 generations for the well-being of the
- 8 environment, residents, indigenous communities,
- 9 and visitors."

10 SECTION 2. Section 201B-1, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is

11 amended as follows:

12 1. By deleting the definition of "destination management".

13 ~~["Destination management" means a collaborative and~~

14 ~~coordinated process with public, private, and community~~

15 ~~stakeholders to manage the various elements of a visitor~~

16 ~~destination to:~~

17 ~~(1) Create, implement, and monitor strategies that attract~~

18 ~~targeted visitor markets and improve visitor~~

19 ~~experiences;~~

20 ~~(2) Improve natural and cultural resources valued by~~

21 ~~Hawaii residents and visitors;~~



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~~(3) Develop and maintain tourism-related infrastructure to prevent overcrowding and overtaxing sites and resources; and~~

~~(4) Ensure that the provision of services enhances the visitor experience."]~~

2. By deleting the definition of "regenerative tourism".

~~["Regenerative tourism" means a tourism model that:~~

~~(1) Is designed and carefully managed to bring net benefits to local communities and destinations; and~~

~~(2) Implements an innovative and sustainable economic development plan to:~~

~~(A) Make net positive contributions;~~

~~(B) Create conditions that allow communities to flourish;~~

~~(C) Engage in collaborative efforts that provide visitors with genuine and meaningful experiences in Hawaii; and~~

~~(D) Improve destinations for current and future generations for the well-being of the environment, residents, indigenous communities, and visitors."]~~



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SECTION 3. Section 201B-3, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

"(a) Except as otherwise provided by law, the authority may:

(1) Sue and be sued;

(2) Have a seal and alter the same at its pleasure;

(3) Through its president and chief executive officer, make and execute contracts and all other instruments necessary or convenient for the exercise of its powers and functions under this chapter; provided that the authority may enter into contracts and agreements for a period of up to five years, subject to the availability of funds; provided further that the authority may enter into agreements for the use of the convention center facility for a period of up to ten years;

(4) Make and alter bylaws for its organization and internal management;

(5) Unless otherwise provided in this chapter, adopt rules in accordance with chapter 91 with respect to its projects, operations, properties, and facilities;



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1 (6) Through its president and chief executive officer,
2 represent the authority in communications with the
3 governor and legislature;

4 (7) Through its president and chief executive officer,
5 provide for the appointment of officers, agents, a
6 sports coordinator, and employees, subject to the
7 approval of the board, prescribing their duties and
8 qualifications, and fixing their salaries, without
9 regard to chapters 76 and 78, if funds have been
10 appropriated by the legislature and allotted as
11 provided by law;

12 (8) Through its president and chief executive officer,
13 purchase supplies, equipment, or furniture;

14 (9) Through its president and chief executive officer,
15 allocate the space or spaces that are to be occupied
16 by the authority and appropriate staff;

17 (10) Through its president and chief executive officer,
18 engage the services of qualified persons to implement
19 the State's strategic tourism [~~management~~] marketing
20 plan or portions thereof as determined by the
21 authority;



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- 1 (11) Through its president and chief executive officer,
2 engage the services of consultants on a contractual
3 basis for rendering professional and technical
4 assistance and advice;
- 5 (12) Procure insurance against any loss in connection with
6 its property and other assets and operations in
7 amounts and from insurers as it deems desirable;
- 8 (13) Contract for or accept revenues, compensation,
9 proceeds, and gifts or grants in any form from any
10 public agency or any other source;
- 11 (14) Develop, coordinate, and implement state policies and
12 directions for tourism and related activities taking
13 into account the economic, social, and physical
14 impacts of tourism on the State, Hawaii's natural
15 environment, and areas frequented by visitors;
- 16 (15) Have a permanent, strong focus on Hawaii brand
17 management;
- 18 (16) Coordinate all agencies and advise the private sector
19 in the development of tourism-related activities and
20 resources;



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- 1 (17) Work to eliminate or reduce barriers to travel to
2 provide a positive and competitive business
3 environment, including coordinating with the
4 department of transportation on issues affecting
5 airlines and air route development;
- 6 (18) Market and promote sports-related activities and
7 events;
- 8 (19) Coordinate the development of new products with the
9 counties and other persons in the public sector and
10 private sector, including the development of sports,
11 culture, health and wellness, education, technology,
12 agriculture, and nature tourism;
- 13 (20) Establish a public information and educational program
14 to inform the public of tourism and tourism-related
15 problems;
- 16 (21) Coordinate the development of tourism educational,
17 training, and career counseling programs;
- 18 (22) Establish a program to monitor, investigate, and
19 respond to complaints about problems resulting
20 directly or indirectly from the tourism industry and
21 taking appropriate action as necessary;



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1 (23) Develop and implement emergency measures to respond to
2 any adverse effects on the tourism industry, pursuant
3 to section 201B-9;

4 (24) Set and collect rents, fees, charges, or other
5 payments for the lease, use, occupancy, or disposition
6 of the convention center facility without regard to
7 chapter 91;

8 (25) Notwithstanding chapter 171, acquire, lease as lessee
9 or lessor, own, rent, hold, and dispose of the
10 convention center facility in the exercise of its
11 powers and the performance of its duties under this
12 chapter;

13 (26) Acquire by purchase, lease, or otherwise, and develop,
14 construct, operate, own, manage, repair, reconstruct,
15 enlarge, or otherwise effectuate, either directly or
16 through developers, a convention center facility;

17 (27) Enhance the tourism industry in the State to grow its
18 positive contributions to residents of the State;
19 ~~[provided that the authority's initiatives shall~~
20 ~~follow destination management practices and integrate~~
21 ~~regenerative tourism,]~~ and



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(28) Focus on perpetuating the uniqueness of the Hawaiian culture and community and their significance to the quality of the visitor experience by ensuring that:

(A) The Hawaiian culture is accurately portrayed by Hawaii's visitor industry;

(B) The Hawaiian language is supported and normalized as an official language of the State;

(C) Hawaiian cultural practitioners and cultural sites are supported, nurtured, and engaged in sustaining the visitor industry; and

(D) A Hawaiian cultural education and training program is provided for the members of the visitor industry workforce who have direct contact with visitors."

SECTION 4. Section 201B-6, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended to read as follows:

"§201B-6 Strategic tourism [management] marketing plan; measures of effectiveness. (a) The authority shall be responsible for developing a strategic tourism [management] marketing plan [~~that advances tourism marketing, complies with destination management best practices, and promotes regenerative~~

1 ~~tourism~~]. The plan shall be a single, comprehensive document
2 that shall be updated every year and include the following:

- 3 (1) Statewide Hawaii brand management efforts and
4 programs;
- 5 (2) Targeted markets;
- 6 (3) Efforts to enter into Hawaii brand management projects
7 that make effective use of cooperative programs;
- 8 (4) Program performance goals and targets that can be
9 monitored as market gauges and used as attributes to
10 evaluate the authority's programs; and
- 11 (5) The authority's guidance and direction for the
12 development and coordination of promotional and
13 marketing programs that build and promote the Hawaii
14 brand, which are implemented through contracts and
15 agreements with destination marketing organizations or
16 other qualified organizations, including:
 - 17 (A) Target markets and the results being sought;
 - 18 (B) Key performance indicators; and
 - 19 (C) Private sector collaborative or cooperative
20 efforts that may be required[~~and~~



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1 ~~(6) Statewide destination management and regenerative~~
2 ~~tourism efforts and programs].~~

3 (b) In accordance with subsection (a), the authority shall
4 develop measures of effectiveness to assess the overall benefits
5 and effectiveness of the strategic tourism ~~[management]~~
6 marketing plan and [include documentation of] maintain records
7 documenting the progress of the strategic tourism ~~[management]~~
8 marketing plan toward achieving the authority's strategic plan
9 goals."

10 SECTION 5. Section 201B-7, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
11 amended by amending subsections (a) and (b) to read as follows:

12 "(a) The authority may enter into contracts and agreements
13 that include the following:

- 14 (1) Tourism promotion, marketing, and development~~[, and~~
15 ~~destination management]~~;
- 16 (2) Market development-related research;
- 17 (3) Product development and diversification issues focused
18 on visitors;
- 19 (4) Promotion, development, and coordination of festivals,
20 community events, cultural activities, environmental
21 stewardship activities, sports-related activities, and



1 events that strengthen the relationships between the
2 place and people for Hawaii's residents and visitors
3 alike;

4 (5) Promotion of Hawaii, through a coordinated statewide
5 effort, as a place to do business, including high
6 technology business, and as a business destination;

7 (6) Reduction of barriers to travel;

8 (7) Marketing, management, use, operation, or maintenance
9 of the convention center facility, including the
10 purchase or sale of goods or services, logo items,
11 concessions, sponsorships, and license agreements, or
12 any use of the convention center facility as a
13 commercial enterprise; provided that effective
14 January 1, 2020, and thereafter, contracts issued
15 pursuant to this paragraph for the marketing of all
16 uses of the convention center facility may be issued
17 separately from the management, use, operation, or
18 maintenance of the facility;

19 (8) Tourism research and statistics to:

20 (A) Measure and analyze tourism trends;



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- 1 (B) Provide information and research to assist in the
- 2 development and implementation of state tourism
- 3 policy; and
- 4 (C) Provide tourism information on:
 - 5 (i) Visitor arrivals, visitor characteristics,
 - 6 and expenditures;
 - 7 (ii) The number of transient accommodation units
 - 8 available, occupancy rates, and room rates;
 - 9 (iii) Airline-related data including seat capacity
 - 10 and number of flights;
 - 11 (iv) The economic, social, and physical impacts
 - 12 of tourism on the State; and
 - 13 (v) The effects of the strategic tourism
 - 14 [~~management~~] marketing programs of the
 - 15 authority on the measures of effectiveness
 - 16 developed pursuant to section 201B-6(b); and
- 17 (9) Any and all other activities necessary to carry out
- 18 the intent of this chapter;
- 19 provided that the authority shall periodically submit a report
- 20 of the contracts and agreements entered into by the authority to



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1 the governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and
2 president of the senate.

3 (b) The authority shall be responsible for:

4 (1) Creating a vision and developing a long-range
5 strategic plan for tourism in Hawaii;

6 (2) Developing [~~destination management action plans for~~
7 ~~each county;~~] and promoting branding for the State,
8 including through management of the Hawaii brand;

9 (3) Promoting, marketing, and developing the tourism
10 industry in the State;

11 (4) Arranging for the conduct of research through
12 contractual services with the [~~University~~] university
13 of Hawaii or any agency or other qualified persons
14 concerning social, economic, and environmental aspects
15 of tourism development in the State;

16 (5) Providing technical or other assistance to agencies
17 and private industry upon request; and

18 (6) Reviewing annually the expenditure of public funds by
19 any visitor industry organization that contracts with
20 the authority to perform tourism promotion, marketing,
21 and development and making recommendations necessary



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1 to ensure the effective use of the funds for the
2 development of tourism."

3 SECTION 6. Section 201B-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
4 amended to read as follows:

5 "**~~§201B-16~~ Annual report.** The authority shall submit a
6 complete and detailed report of its activities, expenditures,
7 and results, including the progress of the strategic tourism
8 ~~[management]~~ marketing plan developed pursuant to section
9 201B-6, toward achieving the authority's strategic plan goals,
10 to the governor and legislature no later than twenty days prior
11 to the convening of each regular session of the legislature.
12 The annual report shall include the descriptions and evaluations
13 of programs funded, together with any recommendations by the
14 authority."

15 SECTION 7. Section 201B-6.4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
16 repealed.

17 ~~["**~~§201B-6.4~~**—Destination management action plans,~~
18 ~~counties; objectives; execution.~~ To meet the destination
19 management objectives for each county, the authority shall
20 perform the actions specified in each of the following plans:

21 ~~(1) Oahu destination management action plan;~~



1 ~~(2) Maui nui destination management action plan;~~
2 ~~(3) Hawaii island destination management action plan; and~~
3 ~~(4) Kauai destination management action plan;~~
4 ~~during the specified phases; provided that the execution of each~~
5 ~~destination management action plan shall be dependent on the~~
6 ~~cooperation and participation of the applicable state or county~~
7 ~~agency or an advisory group established pursuant to section~~
8 ~~201B-13."]~~

9 SECTION 8. There is appropriated out of the general
10 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
11 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 to be
12 allocated as follows:

13 (1) \$ to establish one full-time equivalent
14 (1.0 FTE) tourism liaison officer position within the
15 office of the governor pursuant to section 1 of this
16 Act;

17 (2) \$ to establish five full-time equivalent
18 (5.0 FTE) staff positions within the office of the
19 governor to support the tourism liaison officer; and

20 (3) \$ for operating expenses to perform the
21 duties of the tourism liaison officer;

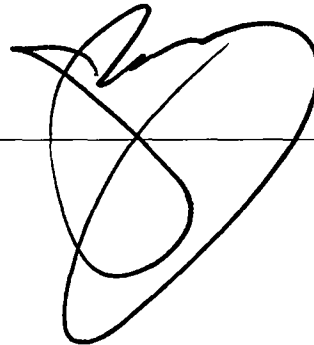
1 provided that in future fiscal bienniums, the amounts
2 appropriated and positions authorized pursuant paragraphs (1),
3 (2), and (3) shall be included in the governor's request for the
4 expenditure of general funds submitted pursuant to section 37-
5 79, Hawaii Revised Statutes; provided further that the amount
6 requested shall be equal to twenty per cent of the total amount
7 of general funds requested to be expended pursuant to section
8 37-79, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

9 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the office of the
10 governor for the purposes of this Act.

11 SECTION 9. Statutory material to be repealed is bracketed
12 and stricken. New statutory material is underscored.

13 SECTION 10. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

14 INTRODUCED BY: _____

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right, positioned over the signature line.

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Report Title:

HTA; Office of the Governor; Tourism Liaison Officer;
Appropriation

Description:

Amends the duties of the Hawaii Tourism Authority to focus on marketing and branding, rather than destination management and regenerative tourism. Establishes the Tourism Liaison Officer position within the Office of the Governor. Includes destination management and regenerative tourism as responsibilities of the Tourism Liaison Officer. Appropriates funds.

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