



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Tuesday, February 3, 2026
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
SB2577
RELATING TO SPORTS TOURISM.

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent and offers comments on SB2577, which requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to conduct a study of the potential economic benefits and costs of sports tourism in the State.

Sports tourism generates economic activity for regions through a variety of sports events combined with tourism spending. This supports jobs, generates tax revenue, and creates a ripple effect for the rest of the economy. According to a recent report, direct spending in the U.S. for sports tourism was \$47.1 billion in 2024 with the top states being California, Texas, and Florida.¹

Currently, data does not exist for the scope of analysis outlined in the bill. DBEDT would recommend hiring a research firm with related experience. We estimate the scope of the research outlined in this bill could be in excess of \$350,000. Furthermore, due to the time associated with issuing a request for proposal and procurement procedures, we request the report submission date be extended to the end of 2027. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Sports Event and Tourism Association (2024). Sports ETA State of the Industry Report: Spectator Sports Tourism.
<https://research.sportseta.org/>



TESTIMONY OF
CAROLINE ANDERSON
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
Tuesday, February 3, 2026
1 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 229

In consideration of
SB 2577
RELATING TO SPORTS TOURISM

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) supports SB 2577, which directs the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to conduct a study on the potential benefits and costs of sports tourism in Hawai'i.

Sports tourism can bring visitors during shoulder seasons, support local jobs, and strengthen our visitor economy. To guide future decisions, the State benefits from clear, consistent information about outcomes, costs, and community impacts.

HTA supports this measure because the study can provide timely data that strengthens planning and helps maximize return on investment (ROI) for sports tourism-related efforts. HTA would use the findings on event types, infrastructure impacts, and visitor spending to guide future prioritization and performance measurement. Specifically, HTA would use the data to do the following:

- Target the right opportunities. Identify sports events and markets that are more likely to attract higher-spending visitors, longer stays, and strong alignment with Hawai'i's capacity and community priorities.
- Measure net benefit. Compare the full costs of hosting events—such as infrastructure, public safety, staffing, and operations—alongside visitor spending and other measurable benefits.
- Strengthen coordination. Support alignment with DBEDT, counties, venues, and partners to focus resources on shared goals and reduce duplication.
- Enhance accountability. Apply consistent performance measures—such as visitor spending, occupancy impacts, and related outcomes—to track results from sports-related efforts.
- Support balanced decision-making. Pair economic findings with community impact considerations so that future actions support quality of life and visitor experience.

HTA believes that having this complete picture will help the State prioritize opportunities that are strategic, measurable, and responsible.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2577.



TESTIMONY OF DAVE ERDMAN, PRESIDENT & CEO
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
JANUARY 29, 2026
IN SUPPORT OF SB 2577 – RELATING TO SPORTS TOURISM

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dave Erdman, and I am the Interim President and CEO of Retail Merchants of Hawai'i, a statewide nonprofit trade association representing retailers, shopping centers, and allied businesses across the islands.

Retail Merchants of Hawai'i supports SB 2577.

A vibrant and diversified tourism economy is essential to the success of Hawai'i retailers. Sports tourism presents a growing opportunity to attract visitors who travel to Hawai'i as participants or spectators at organized sporting events, tournaments, and competitions.

Globally, sports tourism is expanding, but it is also evolving. Scheduling conflicts, competition among destinations, and changes in consumer behavior are reshaping how and why travelers choose where to attend sporting events.

For Hawai'i to remain competitive, it is important to study emerging sports, new program formats, and the types of visitors sports tourism can attract.

SB 2577 provides an opportunity to better understand sports tourism as a "purpose-driven vacation" and travel motivation, including who these visitors are, how long they stay, and how they contribute to the local economy. This information is critical for retailers, restaurants, accommodations, and logistics partners that depend on consistent visitor demand.

The findings of this study will help inform strategic planning, policy decisions, and future investments that support Hawai'i's tourism economy and the broader retail ecosystem.

For these reasons, Retail Merchants of Hawai'i respectfully supports SB 2577.
Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Erdman
Interim President and CEO
Retail Merchants of Hawai'i

SB-2577

Submitted on: 1/30/2026 5:58:07 PM

Testimony for EDT on 2/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry Support

2577 SB RELATING TO SPORTS TOURISM.	EDT	CR 229 & Videoconference	Feb 3, 2026 1:00 PM
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