

Honolulu, Hawaii

**APR 22 2026**

RE: GOV. MSG. NOS. 594,  
595, 596, 597, 598,  
599, 600, 601, 602,  
603, 604

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi  
President of the Senate  
Thirty-Third State Legislature  
Regular Session of 2026  
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Economic Development and Tourism, to which was referred Governor's Message Nos. 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, and 604, submitting for study and consideration the nominations of:

ADVISORY BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY

G.M. No. 594	DANNY OJIRI for a term to expire 06-30-2029;
G.M. No. 595	JOEL GUY for a term to expire 06-30-2029;
G.M. No. 596	LINDA WONG for a term to expire 06-30-2029;
G.M. No. 597	KIMBERLY AGAS for a term to expire 06-30-2026;
G.M. No. 598	TERRY FISCHER for a term to expire 06-30-2029;
G.M. No. 599	MERICIA ELMORE for a term to expire 06-30-2029;
G.M. No. 600	GRANT TABURA for a term to expire 06-30-2029;



G.M. No. 601 TROY LAZARO  
for a term to expire 06-30-2029;

G.M. No. 602 LEAH BELMONTE  
for a term to expire 06-30-2029;

G.M. No. 603 JAMES MCCULLY  
for a term to expire 06-30-2026; and

G.M. No. 604 CHRISTIAN WEST  
for a term to expire 06-30-2028,

begs leave to report as follows:

Your Committee reviewed the personal histories, resumes, and statements submitted by Danny Ojiri, Joel Guy, Linda Wong, Kimberly Agas, Terry Fischer, Mericia Elmore, Grant Tabura, Troy Lazaro, Leah Belmonte, James McCully, and Christian West for service on the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority.

DANNY OJIRI

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Danny Ojiri from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism and Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Ojiri's experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify him for appointment to the Advisory Board of Directors as a member appointed by the President of the Senate and with knowledge, experience, and expertise in the area of accommodations. During the course of Mr. Ojiri's career, he has gained broad experience and knowledge about the hospitality industry and international market development. Your Committee notes that Mr. Ojiri has served in various positions at the Outrigger Hospitality Group since 1998, and is currently its Vice President of Marketing Development, responsible for overseeing market development efforts across multiple international regions, including the United Kingdom, Japan, Korea, and China. Previously, Mr. Ojiri held various positions at Jetour Hawaii Inc., beginning as a tour coordinator and advancing to Vice President of Purchasing and Planning. Mr. Ojiri is also an active member in his community and has volunteered with the Honolulu



Festival Foundation's Board since 2017. Your Committee further notes that Mr. Ojiri has served as an interim member of the Advisory Board since 2025 and has a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of its members. He has made significant contributions to the Advisory Board's brand marketing and strategic tourism efforts as Vice Chair of the Branding Standing Committee and a member of the Film Tourism Standing Committee. Your Committee therefore recommends that Danny Ojiri be appointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on his knowledge, experience, and commitment to public service.

JOEL GUY

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Joel Guy from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Hawai'i Tourism Authority; Mayor of the County of Kaua'i; Kaua'i Visitors Bureau; Hui Maka'āinana o Makana; and one individual.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Guy's experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify him for appointment to the Advisory Board of Directors as a member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and representative of the County of Kauai. During the course of Mr. Guy's career, he has gained broad experience and knowledge in entrepreneurship, community engagement, and environmental stewardship. Your Committee notes that Mr. Guy is the Executive Director of The Hanalei Initiative which he founded in 2018, where he facilitates public-private partnerships to address key community issues on the north shore of Kauai. Mr. Guy has also worked as an independent videographer for over twenty years and is the owner of Grass Shack Productions. Mr. Guy is also an active member in his community, including serving as President of the Hanalei to Haena Community Association from 2008 to 2018, gaining valuable experience in destination management. Your Committee further notes that Mr. Guy has served as an interim member of the Advisory Board since 2025 and has a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of its members. He currently serves as Vice Chair of the Administrative Standing Committee. He is also a member of the Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committee, where his experience and knowledge will assist in providing strategic guidance on destination management and the implementation of the State's various tourism-related plans. Your Committee therefore



recommends that Joel Guy be appointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on his knowledge, experience, and commitment to public service.

LINDA WONG

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Linda Wong from Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism and Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Wong's experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify her for appointment as a member of the Advisory Board of Directors. During the course of Ms. Wong's career, she has gained broad experience and knowledge about state and county government and the hospitality and visitor industries. Your Committee notes that Ms. Wong is President and Chief Executive Officer of World of Aloha, which oversees the preservation of the forty-two acre Kahaluu Fishpond, a significant local historic site listed on the state and federal registers of historic places. Previously, Ms. Wong served as the Chief of Staff to the former Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, Frank F. Fasi, for a decade. Ms. Wong is also an active member in her community, volunteers with the Kids at Risk Mentoring Program Hawaii and Downtown Athletic Club, and was honored by the City and County of Honolulu with the Oihana Maikai Award for her career achievements and community service. Your Committee further notes that Ms. Wong has served as an interim member of the Advisory Board since 2025 and has a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of its members. She currently serves as Vice Chair of the Film Tourism Standing Committee and a member of the Sports Tourism Standing Committee, and will utilize her knowledge and expertise to guide initiatives that promote Hawaii through film, television, and integrated marketing. Your Committee therefore recommends that Linda Wong be appointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on her knowledge, experience, and commitment to public service.

KIMBERLY AGAS

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the reappointment of Kimberly Agas from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Hawai'i Tourism Authority; Hawai'i Hotel Alliance; Hawaii Hospitality



Group; Ko Olina Community Association, Inc. and Ko Olina Resort Operators Association, Inc.; and four individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Agas' experience, knowledge, and proven leadership on the Advisory Board qualify her for reappointment to the Advisory Board of Directors as a member with knowledge, experience, and expertise in the area of accommodations. Your Committee notes that Ms. Agas has been a hospitality management executive since 1989 and currently serves as the General Manager of Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa, where she is responsible for over one thousand three hundred employees and all aspects of the one thousand-room resort. Previously, Ms. Agas held leadership roles in various Outrigger accommodations in Honolulu, including as Vice President of Operations with Outrigger Beachfront Deluxe Resorts. She also volunteered as a member of the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association from 1995 to 2025. Your Committee further notes that Ms. Agas has served on the Advisory Board since 2022 and currently serves as the Advisory Board's Co-Vice Chair, Vice Chair of the Branding Standing Committee, and a member of the Sports Tourism Standing Committee. Your Committee finds that Ms. Agas' experience and knowledge of hotel operations, condominium resort management, business development, and renovation project management will continue to be assets to the Advisory Board. Your Committee therefore recommends that Kimberly Agas be reappointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on her experience, knowledge, and commitment to public service.

#### TERRY FISCHER

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Terry Fischer from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism and Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Fischer's experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify him for appointment to the Advisory Board of Directors as a member with knowledge, experience, and expertise in the area of transportation and representing a tourism-impacted entity. During the course of Mr. Fischer's career, he has gained broad experience and knowledge about the bus transportation industry. Your Committee notes that Mr. Fischer has been the President and Owner of Polynesian Adventure Tours in Honolulu and



PAT Tours, LLC in Lihue, Kauai since 2017, where he leads tourism operations, marketing, and project management. Mr. Fischer also owns and manages transportation and tour companies in California, Nevada, and Canada, and has previously served as the Director of Sales with MTR Western in Seattle, Washington. Mr. Fischer is also an active member in his profession and serves as the Chairman of the Board for the American Bus Association and as a board member for the California Bus Association. Your Committee further notes that Mr. Fischer has served as an interim member of the Advisory Board since 2025 and has a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of its members. Mr. Fischer currently serves on various committees and permitted interaction groups, including as the Vice Chair of the Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committee, and a member of the Branding Standing Committee, Sports Tourism Standing Committee, and the newly formed Governance Study Permitted Interaction Group. Mr. Fischer also chaired the Strategic Plan Permitted Interaction Group that issued recommendations for the Authority's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, and his hands-on approach to operations and willingness to serve despite significant professional responsibilities have been valuable to the Hawaii Tourism Authority. Your Committee therefore recommends that Terry Fischer be appointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on his knowledge, experience, and commitment to public service.

#### MERICIA ELMORE

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Mericia Elmore from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Hawai'i Tourism Authority; Honolulu Film Office; IATSE Local 665; Pride at Work-Hawai'i; Hawaii State AFL-CIO; SAG-AFTRA; Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO; Hawaii Ports Maritime Council; Hawaii Teamsters Local 996; and twenty individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Elmore's experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify her for appointment to the Advisory Board of Directors as a member with knowledge, experience, and expertise in the area of entertainment. During the course of Ms. Elmore's career, she has gained broad experience and knowledge in the film industry, law, and higher education. Your Committee notes that Ms. Elmore has worked as the Executive Director of SAG-AFTRA, Hawaii Local, since 2017, where she manages administration,



communications, budgeting, governance, member outreach, legislative advocacy, and general operations. She also serves in multiple university-level teaching roles in various fields, including intellectual property law, communications, and subjects concerning creative professionals, including as a lecturer at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and University of Hawaii West Oahu and as a Senior Adjunct Professor at Hawaii Pacific University. Previously, Ms. Elmore served as the Founder and attorney at Lotus Law LLC and Founder and President of Left of Center Production and Left of Center LLC. Ms. Elmore is also an active member in her community and serves on the boards of Ohina Labs and the American Advertising Federation, Hawaii. Your Committee further notes that Ms. Elmore has served as an interim member of the Advisory Board since 2025 and has a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of its members. She currently contributes to the Advisory Board as Chair of the Film Tourism Standing Committee, leading initiatives that promote the State through film and television, and as a member of the Administrative Standing Committee and Branding Standing Committee. Your Committee therefore recommends that Mericia Elmore be appointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on her knowledge, experience, and commitment to public service.

#### GRANT TABURA

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Grant Tabura from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism and Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Tabura's experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify him for appointment to the Advisory Board of Directors as a member with knowledge, experience, and expertise in the area of entertainment. During the course of Mr. Tabura's career, he has gained broad experience and knowledge in the entertainment industry, primarily in radio and television, and has been nominated for four Emmy Awards, winning one. Your Committee notes that Mr. Tabura currently works as the Host and Producer of Cooking Hawaii Style and the Host Writer and Producer of Lanai's Travel Club. Mr. Tabura has also worked as a spokesperson for various organizations in international markets, including the tourism authorities for Malaysia, Thailand, Portugal, and the Philippines. Previously, Mr. Tabura served as the Founder,



Morning Drive Host, and Program Director of the Island 98.5 radio station. Mr. Tabura is also an active member in his community and organized the Lanai Food Drive and Aloha Stadium Food Drive during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your Committee further notes that Mr. Tabura has served as an interim member of the Advisory Board since 2025 and has a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of its members. He is currently Vice Chair of the Sports Tourism Standing Committee, and has served as a spokesperson for the Hawaii Tourism Authority sports marketing initiatives, to support efforts to advance the State's position as a premier sports tourism destination and leverage events to drive economic impact, brand visibility, and community benefit. Your Committee therefore recommends that Grant Tabura be appointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on his knowledge, experience, and commitment to public service.

#### TROY LAZARO

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Troy Lazaro from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Hawai'i Tourism Authority; Mayor of the County of Kaua'i; Kaua'i Visitors Bureau; and eight individuals.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. Lazaro's experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify him for appointment to the Advisory Board of Directors as a member with knowledge, experience, and expertise in the area of Hawaiian cultural practices. During the course of Mr. Lazaro's career, he has gained broad experience and knowledge about issues at the intersection of Hawaii's culture, community, and tourism industry, such as environmental stewardship. Your Committee notes that as a Kumu Hula and founder and leader of Hālau Kā Pā Hula O Hīnano, Mr. Lazaro has dedicated his life to perpetuating and protecting the Hawaiian way of life. Since 2017, he has been guiding students, teaching them the art of hula and foundational values of aloha, mālama, kuleana, and ha'aha'a. He also serves as a public speaker and cultural facilitator at community gatherings, educational forums, and public events. Mr. Lazaro is a trusted and active member of his community and has volunteered with various community initiatives, including leading cultural protocols at public festivals and collaborating with local organizations to promote mālama 'āina. Your Committee



further notes that Mr. Lazaro has served as an interim member of the Advisory Board since 2025 and has a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of its members. He is currently a member of various standing committees, including the committees on Branding, Film Tourism, and Ho'okahua Hawai'i, providing valuable and relevant guidance to the Hawaii Tourism Authority's community-based programs and efforts to strengthen cultural integrity across its work. Your Committee therefore recommends that Troy Lazaro be appointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on his knowledge, experience, and commitment to public service.

LEAH BELMONTE

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Leah Belmonte from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Hawai'i Tourism Authority; Mahi Pono, LLC; and one individual.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Ms. Belmonte's experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify her for appointment to the Advisory Board of Directors as a member representing the County of Maui. During the course of Ms. Belmonte's career, she has gained broad experience in the field of human resources, including valuable knowledge on talent acquisition; training and development; employee relations; federal, state, and county labor laws; and community relations. Your Committee notes that Ms. Belmonte has worked as the Director of Human Resources at Mahi Pono, LLC, since 2022, where she leads the policies, activities, and staff of its Human Resources Department to ensure legal compliance and implementation of the organization's mission and talent strategy. Previously, Ms. Belmonte served as the Governor's Representative for the County of Maui from 2015 to 2022, using her on-island perspective and workforce expertise to keep the Governor's Office informed of local concerns and liaise with community leaders. Ms. Belmonte also has experience in the county of Maui's hospitality industry, including service at various resort properties, where she held human resources leadership roles. Ms. Belmonte is also an active member in her community and volunteers with the Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center as an advisory board member. Your Committee further notes that Ms. Belmonte has served as an interim member of the Advisory Board since 2025 and has a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of its members. She currently serves as a member of the Administrative and



Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committees, providing valuable insight informed by her on-island perspective and workforce expertise. Your Committee therefore recommends that Leah Belmonte be appointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on her knowledge, experience, and commitment to public service.

JAMES MCCULLY

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the reappointment of James McCully from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism and Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. McCully's experience, knowledge, and proven leadership on the Advisory Board qualify him for reappointment as a member of the Advisory Board of Directors. Your Committee notes that Mr. McCully has been an entrepreneur in the agricultural industry since 1976. He founded and continues to manage Mauna Kea Orchids, a leading international orchid breeder, and McCully Works, a real estate management and development company based in Hilo. Mr. McCully has also worked as an agricultural consultant for over thirty-five years, developing professional relationships across the United States and countries such as Belize, Brazil, and the Netherlands. Your Committee further notes that Mr. McCully has served on the Advisory Board since 2022 and currently serves as the Advisory Board's Co-Vice Chair and Chair of the Administrative Standing Committee and the CEO Search Permitted Interaction Group. Your Committee finds that Mr. McCully's experience and knowledge will continue to be assets to the Advisory Board. Your Committee therefore recommends that James McCully be reappointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on his experience, knowledge, and commitment to public service.

CHRISTIAN WEST

Your Committee received testimony in support of the nomination for the appointment of Christian West from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Hawai'i Tourism Authority; and Hawaii State AFL-CIO.

Upon review of the testimony, your Committee finds that Mr. West's experience, background, and commitment to public service qualify him for appointment as a member of the Advisory



Board of Directors. During the course of Mr. West's career, he has gained broad experience and knowledge about the hotel industry, workforce conditions, and labor relations. Your Committee notes that Mr. West has been serving as President of the ILWU Local 142 since 2022, where he leads the State's largest private union, representing sixteen thousand workers; oversees contract negotiations and labor relations for over one hundred fifty agreements, including for nearly ten thousand hotel workers; and liaises with civic and legislative leaders on behalf of the union. Previously, Mr. West served as the Hawaii Longshore Division Representative and Hawaii Longshore Division Negotiating Committee Member with the ILWU Local 142, managing union activities, grievances, contract enforcement, and finances; representing longshore workers in collective bargaining; conducting labor research; and developing negotiation strategies. Mr. West is also an active member in his community and volunteers with Iolani School as an Assistant Wrestling Coach. Your Committee further notes that Mr. West has served as an interim member of the Advisory Board since 2025 and has a thorough understanding of the roles and responsibilities of its members. He currently chairs the Sports Tourism Standing Committee, and his understanding of the challenges faced by hotel workers and the opportunities for the hotel industry will be invaluable to the Hawaii Tourism Authority as it continues to improve workforce development in the State's tourism industry. Your Committee therefore recommends that Christian West be appointed to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority based on his knowledge, experience, and commitment to public service.

As affirmed by the records of votes of the members of your Committee on Economic Development and Tourism that are attached to this report, your Committee, after full consideration of the background, experience, and qualifications of the nominees, has found the nominees to be qualified for the positions to which nominated and recommends that the Senate advise and consent to the nominations.



Respectfully submitted on  
behalf of the members of the  
Committee on Economic  
Development and Tourism,

  
LYNN DECOITE, Chair



















The Senate  
 Thirty-Third Legislature  
 State of Hawai'i

**Record of Votes**  
**Committee on Economic Development and Tourism**  
**EDT**  
**Advise and Consent**

Governor's Message No.:* <b>GM 602</b>	Committee Referral: <b>EDT</b>	Date: <b>03/31/26</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> The Committee is reconsidering its decision.				
The Recommendation is:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advise and Consent 2340 <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Not Advise and Consent 2345</span>				
Members	Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
DECOITE, Lynn (C)	✓			
WAKAI, Glenn (VC)	✓			
FUKUNAGA, Carol	✓			
KIM, Donna Mercado	✓			
FEVELLA, Kurt	✓			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Recommendation:				
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adopted <span style="margin-left: 150px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Not Adopted</span>				
Chair's or Designee's Signature:				
Distribution:				
Original File with Committee Report	Yellow Committee	Pink Drafting Agency		

\*Only one Governor's Message per Record of Votes



