

STAND. COM. REP. NO.

2418

Honolulu, Hawaii

FEB 19 2026

RE: S.B. No. 2906
S.D. 1

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 S.B. No. 2906 entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO TOURISM,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to:

- (1) Amend the duties of the Hawaii Tourism Authority to focus on marketing and branding, rather than destination management and regenerative tourism;
- (2) Establish the Tourism Liaison Officer position within the Office of the Governor;
- (3) Include destination management and regenerative tourism as responsibilities of the Tourism Liaison Officer; and
- (4) Appropriate funds.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure from the Activities & Attractions Association of Hawaii, Inc.; Maui-Molokai Sea Cruises; Maui Ocean Center; Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association; and one individual.



Your Committee received testimony in opposition to this measure from the Office of Economic Development of the County of Kauai and one individual.

Your Committee received comments on this measure from the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Your Committee finds that the Hawaii Tourism Authority has been burdened by increasingly complex and overlapping responsibilities related to destination management, regenerative tourism, and the development and implementation of a comprehensive statewide tourism strategy, which have strained the Authority's capacity and created uncertainty regarding leadership, accountability, and long-term planning. Businesses in the local tourism industry have expressed a desire for the Authority to focus more exclusively on marketing activities. Your Committee further finds that separating marketing and destination management functions under independent leaders with the appropriate expertise will align these activities as complementary, rather than competing, priorities. This measure improves accountability and sustainability in the tourism industry through clearer lines of authority, centralized oversight, and a single point of leadership for long-term planning.

Your Committee acknowledges the concerns raised in testimony by the Hawaii Tourism Authority and Office of Economic Development of the County of Kauai that separating critical functions of tourism governance without mandated integration mechanisms to ensure policy alignment may result in a duplication of efforts, operational disconnects, and a more complex decision making structure. Your Committee has also been advised that the Office of the Governor will be providing the Senate with a description of the role and responsibilities of the Tourism Liaison Officer to be established by this measure to prevent the overlap of state agency functions. Therefore, amendments to this measure are necessary to address this matter.

Accordingly, your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Deleting language that would have:



- (A) Described the duties of the Tourism Liaison Officer, including responsibility for destination management and regenerative tourism;
 - (B) Authorized or required the Tourism Liaison Officer to exercise certain powers to carry out the Officer's duties;
 - (C) Required the Tourism Liaison Officer to perform the actions specified in each county's destination management action plan during the specified phases, under certain circumstances; and
 - (D) Defined "destination management" and "regenerative tourism";
- (2) Inserting an effective date of July 1, 2050, to encourage further discussion; and
 - (3) Making a technical, nonsubstantive amendment for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

Your Committee notes that this measure, as amended, does not specify the duties of the Tourism Liaison Officer. Should your Committees on Ways and Means choose to deliberate on this measure, your Committee respectfully requests that it examines the issues and concerns raised by the testimony of the Hawaii Tourism Authority and Office of Economic Development of the County of Kauai and input received from the Office of the Governor, and clarify the role and responsibilities of the Tourism Liaison Officer.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Economic Development and Tourism that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of S.B. No. 2906, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as S.B. No. 2906, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committee on Ways and Means.



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


LYNN DECOITE, Chair



