

Josh Green, M.D.
Governor

Sylvia Luke
Lt. Governor

James Kunane Tokioka
DBEDT Director

Dane K. Wicker
DBEDT Deputy Director

Walter Thoemmes
Stadium Authority Chair

Michael R. Yadao
Stadium Authority Executive Director



Statement of
MICHAEL R. YADAO
Stadium Authority
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Tuesday, March 03, 2026
01:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
G.M. 513
**SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE STADIUM
AUTHORITY, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, TRACEY LESETAR-SMITH,
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029.**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in **strong support** of the confirmation of Tracey Lesetar-Smith to the Stadium Authority.

Ms. Lesetar-Smith brings a highly relevant professional background that aligns directly with the evolving responsibilities of the Stadium Authority. She is a seasoned sports, entertainment, and government affairs executive with more than 20 years of experience and has served in senior leadership roles at major national sports organizations, including as Senior Vice President and General Counsel of NASCAR and General Counsel for Bellator MMA.

In these positions, she oversaw complex legal operations, contracts, business affairs, and large-scale organizational initiatives, including league expansion, intellectual property, and major operational transitions. Her career reflects deep experience in the exact areas the Stadium Authority must now manage, public-private partnerships, venue use agreements, event operations, and long-term facility governance.

Ms. Lesetar-Smith also serves as an educator and sports law instructor at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa William S. Richardson School of Law, helping train students to understand the real-world intersection of sports business, media, and law. Her teaching role demonstrates a commitment not only to the industry, but to developing local talent and strengthening Hawai'i's future workforce in sports and entertainment management.

As the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District project progresses, the Stadium Authority is transitioning into oversight of agreements, tenants, programming, and long-term operational stewardship. A member with firsthand experience negotiating major sports contracts, managing leagues, and understanding event operations at a national level provides critical expertise to protect the State's interests and ensure responsible decision-making.

Ms. Lesetar-Smith's background uniquely bridges legal oversight, sports operations, and public accountability. Her national experience combined with her engagement in Hawai'i's academic and professional community will help the Stadium Authority navigate the next phase of development and long-term management.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm Tracey Lesetar-Smith to the Stadium Authority.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of Ms. Lesetar-Smith.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
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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, March 3, 2026
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

GM 513
**SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE STADIUM
AUTHORITY, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, TRACEY LESETAR-SMITH,
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029.**

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

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), **supports** the confirmation of **Tracey Lesetar-Smith** to the Hawai'i Stadium Authority.

Ms. Lesetar-Smith brings extensive experience in sports, entertainment, and legal affairs, including senior leadership roles overseeing contracts, operations, and governance for major national sports organizations, as well as teaching sports law at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Her background in venue operations, negotiations, and public-private partnerships provides expertise directly relevant to the New Aloha Stadium Entertainment District (NASSED) as it moves toward development and long-term operations.

Her professional experience, combined with her engagement in Hawai'i's academic and professional community, will help ensure the project advances in a responsible and economically beneficial manner.

For these reasons, I respectfully support her confirmation.