



TESTIMONY OF
CAROLINE ANDERSON
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
Tuesday, March 31, 2026
1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 229

In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 595
CONFIRMATION OF JOEL GUY
ADVISORY BOARD OF DIRECTORS, HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of Joel Guy's nomination to continue serving as a member of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Advisory Board of Directors.

As a member of HTA's Advisory Board, Mr. Guy serves as vice chair of the Administrative Standing Committee, which oversees the contract terms of the president and chief executive officer and makes recommendations related to their evaluation; as vice chair of the CEO Search Permitted Interaction Group, which recruits, hires and establishes contract terms for HTA's president and CEO; on the Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committee, which provides strategic guidance on destination stewardship, Hawaiian culture, visitor experiences, workforce development, and implementation of HTA's Strategic Plan, Destination Management Action Plans and the state Tourism Functional Plan; on the newly formed Governance Study Permitted Interaction Group, which reviews and makes recommendations to the Advisory Board on the Governance Study Final Recommendations; and on the Strategic Plan Permitted Interaction Group, which discussed and reviewed proposed strategies and tactics and provides recommendations for HTA's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

Shaping the future of tourism is a critical component of HTA's mission and statutory mandate. In addition to having an Advisory Group for each island to shape our island-specific Destination Management Action Plans, we also believe it is essential to have neighbor island representation on the HTA Advisory Board of Directors. We believe Mr. Guy serves as an example of how geographic diversity benefits successful policy and strategic direction for HTA.

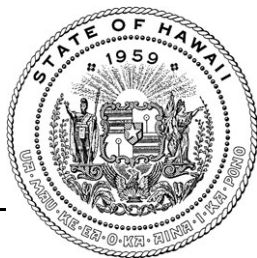
As the founder and leader of the nonprofit organization, The Hanalei Initiative, Mr. Guy has been instrumental in facilitating public-private partnerships to address key community issues on the north shore of Kaua'i. His leadership experience in consensus-building and in bringing diverse groups together to work toward a shared vision is truly one of Mr. Guy's many talents.

Mr. Guy served as President of the Hanalei to Hā'ena Community Association for a decade, from 2008 to 2018. Hā'ena State Park has become a model of destination management, with residents taking an active role in managing various aspects of the park to mitigate the impact of high utilization by both residents and visitors. His experience with destination management has been extremely helpful for the HTA team.

Finally, his understanding of state and county government adds another valuable dimension to the expertise Mr. Guy brings to the HTA Advisory Board. He served on the staff of former Representative Hermina Morita and as a Commissioner on the Kaua'i County Charter Review Commission, which reviewed Kaua'i County ordinances and made recommendations for amendments.

All of his experiences are relevant to the HTA Advisory Board and, in summary, we would like to recommend our strong support for Mr. Guy's continued service on the HTA Advisory Board of Directors.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support.



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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Testimony of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
Tuesday, March 31, 2026
1:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 229

In consideration of
GM 595
**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Advisory Board of Directors
of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, gubernatorial nominee,
JOEL GUY, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.**

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of Joel Guy's nomination to continue serving as a member of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Advisory Board of Directors.

As the founder and leader of The Hanalei Initiative, Mr. Guy has helped facilitate public-private partnerships to address key community issues on Kaua'i's north shore. His leadership in consensus-building and bringing diverse groups together around a shared vision has provided valuable perspective to HTA.

Mr. Guy also served as president of the Hanalei to Hā'ena Community Association from 2008 to 2018. Hā'ena State Park has become a strong example of destination management, with residents playing an active role in mitigating the impacts of high use by both residents and visitors. His experience with destination management, together with his background in state and county government, makes his continued service especially valuable.

As a member of HTA's Advisory Board, Mr. Guy serves as the vice chair of the Administrative Standing Committee. This committee oversees the contract terms for the president and chief executive officer and makes recommendations related to their evaluations. He is also the vice chair of the CEO Search Permitted Interaction Group, which is responsible for recruiting, hiring, and establishing contract terms for HTA's president and CEO.

Additionally, Mr. Guy is a member of the Ho'okahua Hawai'i Standing Committee, which provides strategic guidance on destination stewardship, Hawaiian culture, visitor experiences, workforce development, and the implementation of HTA's Strategic Plan, Destination Management Action Plans, and the state Tourism Functional Plan. He will participate in the newly formed Governance Study Permitted Interaction Group, which reviews and makes recommendations to the Advisory Board regarding the Governance Study Final Recommendations.

Lastly, he is a member of the Strategic Plan Permitted Interaction Group, which reviewed proposed strategies and tactics, provided recommendations for HTA's 2026-2030 Strategic Plan.

Shaping the future of tourism is a critical component of HTA's mission and statutory mandate. In addition to island-specific advisory groups that help inform destination management efforts, strong neighbor island representation on the HTA Advisory Board is also important. Mr. Guy's service reflects how geographic diversity strengthens policy and strategic direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Mr. Guy.

MAYOR DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI

COUNTY OF KAUA'I



Testimony of
Derek S.K. Kawakami
Mayor, County of Kaua'i

Before the
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
March 31, 2026 at 1:00 PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

LATE

In consideration of
GM 595 Joel Guy
Gubernatorial Nominee for the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

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

I write in strong support of the confirmation of Joel Guy to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. Joel brings a rare and valuable combination of community leadership, environmental stewardship, and deep roots in Kaua'i's North Shore. These qualities make him exceptionally well-suited to help shape the future of tourism in Hawai'i.

Joel is the founder and Executive Director of The Hanalei Initiative (THI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to addressing the immediate and long-term community and environmental needs of Hanalei and Kaua'i's North Shore. THI's approach is rooted in community-led initiatives supported by government collaboration. By fostering strong community engagement and building effective relationships with local government, THI develops solutions, implements strategies, and sees its projects through to completion. This model reflects exactly the kind of thoughtful, place-based leadership that the Hawai'i Tourism Authority needs at the advisory level.

Most significantly, Joel and THI's collaboration with Hui Maka'ainana o Makana, the Department of Land and Natural Resources State Parks Division, and community members developed the visitor management system that has transformed the Hā'ena State Park to a place that honors its cultural heritage, respects the natural resources, and balances the needs of community while providing a measured and intentional experience for the visitor. This plan models the kind of thoughtful and multi-stakeholder engagement needed to move our visitor industry forward.

Joel's professional background further demonstrates his readiness for this role. As a longtime entrepreneur and owner of Grass Shack Productions, he has told Hawai'i's stories through film and documentary work across the globe. As former Owner and General Manager of Bamboo Bamboo Restaurant in Hanalei, he understands the hospitality industry from the ground up, including the importance of local sourcing and community economic relationships. His 2009 service as Legislative Staff in the Hawai'i State Legislature gave him firsthand experience navigating the policy process and communicating complex issues to the public.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Joel has dedicated decades of volunteer service to various commissions for our county and state. Through each of these roles, he has consistently worked to balance the needs of residents, businesses, and the natural environment.

Hawai'i's tourism industry faces urgent questions about sustainability, cultural integrity, and community impact. Joel Guy has spent his career at the intersection of all three. I respectfully urge you to **Advise and Consent** to Joel Guy's nomination and forward to the full Senate for their consideration.



KAUAI
VISITORS BUREAU™

March 27, 2026

Honorable Lynn DeCoite
Chair, Committee on Economic
Development and Tourism
Hawai'i State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Joel Guy / Support for HTA Advisory Board Position

Aloha Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

I'd like to offer this letter of support for Joel Guy's nomination for a seat on the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Advisory Board,

I've known Joel Guy for 10+ years through our work on the Hā'ena State Master Plan. We spent two intense years developing the important North Shore plan that has created positive change for the Hā'ena area. Joel has been committed to the efforts that crafted the important balance between community and tourism. I've seen Joel Guy work outside the box with creative solutions that are sensitive to his community, while supporting tourism.

Kaua'i is proud of the work Hanalei Initiative has created with Joel Guy at the helm. Going a step further, Hanalei Initiative created a survey that provides feedback from visitors using the North Shore shuttle to improve their efforts. It has been a win-win situation for an area that was in crisis. I applaud Joel Guy's commitment to our island and his North Shore community. I hope you will support Joel Guy's nomination to the HTA Advisory Board.

Mahalo nui loa in advance for your time and consideration. Please don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

With Aloha,

Susan A. Kanoho
Managing Director/Island Chapters
Executive Director, Kaua'i Visitors Bureau



HUI MAKA'ĀINANA O MAKANA

The Hui Maka'āinana o Makana is a non-profit organization dedicated to perpetuating and teaching the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna (ancestors) through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of the natural and cultural resources within Hā'ena State Park, Kaua'i.

March 30, 2026

Chair and Members
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
Hawai'i State Legislature
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana, we are in support of the confirmation of Joel Guy to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Advisory Board.

Through his work on Kaua'i's North Shore, Joel has shown a sincere commitment to caring for 'āina and supporting the communities who steward these places. His efforts in managing access and transportation have helped create space for cultural practices to continue, while also addressing the impacts of increasing visitor pressure.

Joel approaches this work with humility and a willingness to listen. He understands that protecting our resources and way of life requires thoughtful management and collaboration with the community. His work has contributed to a better balance between visitors and the needs of our residents and cultural practitioners.

We believe he will carry these values with him in service to the state.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen P. Chin

Kathleen P. Chin
Executive Director
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

GM-595

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 9:22:56 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/31/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hermina Morita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**The Honorable Lynn De Coite, Chair
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
Hawai'i State Legislature
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813**

Ref: GM595 - Nomination of Joel Guy to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority

Aloha Chair De Coite, Vice Chair Wakai and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of the nomination of Joel Guy to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

I have known Joel Guy for more than 30 years. We first worked together when Joel served as a session staffer in my office when I was a State Representative. In response to the devastating April 2018 floods on Kauai's north shore, Joel and I worked together in that recovery effort which eventually lead to the formation of The Hanalei Initiative, a Hanalei community non-profit, where Joel became its Executive Director and I served as a founding board member and its past President. Currently, I am the Vice President of the Hanalei Initiative, and the President of its subsidiary company, the Hanalei Community Shuttle and Access Initiative. So for the past eight years I have worked closely with Joel on community-based solutions to complex visitor management and transportation challenges on Kaua'i's North Shore. I can strongly attest that Joel brings a thoughtful, collaborative approach and a strong commitment to balancing resident needs with responsible tourism.

Joel is also a trusted community leader who listens, builds consensus to deliver practical solutions. He understands the importance of managing tourism in a way that not only protects our natural resources but also recognizes the need to mitigate the impacts to our communities to address quality of life issues for our residents.

I am confident that if "we" as a community and advocates of the visitor industry truly want to embrace the values of aloha 'āina, malama and regenerative tourism, Joel will serve with integrity, and provide a fresh perspective and voice to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Mina Morita

Hermina “Mina” Morita

P.O. Box 791, Hanalei, HI 96714