



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. 599**  
**CONFIRMATION OF MERICIA ELMORE**  
**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 Mericia Elmore's continued service on the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Advisory Board of Directors.

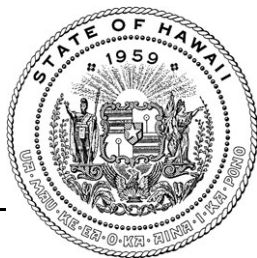
As a member of HTA's Advisory Board, Ms. Elmore serves on the Administrative Standing Committee, which oversees the contract terms of the president and chief executive officer and makes recommendations related to their evaluation; on the Branding Standing Committee, which provides strategic review, evaluation and recommendations on HTA's branding and marketing initiatives, programs and activities, with a particular focus on destination branding and meetings, conventions and incentive business; as chair of the Film Tourism Standing Committee, which guides initiatives that promote Hawai'i through film and television and integrated marketing to drive economic development and foster a positive, authentic representation of the state; on the CEO Search Permitted Interaction Group, which recruits, hires and establishes contract terms for HTA's president and CEO; 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.

Ms. Elmore wears many hats, putting her law degree from the University of Hawai'i Richardson School of Law to great use for the common good of all. She brings a deep commitment to each of her roles. As the Executive Director of SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i Local, she has a deep understanding of the power of film and movies to continually put Hawai'i on the map as a desirable visitor destination. We appreciate her perspectives and her advocacy for the actors and actresses throughout Hawai'i.

She also serves in many university-level courses as a faculty member. Since 2016, she has been

the senior adjunct professor in the Department of Communication at Hawai'i Pacific University and a lecturer for the Academy for Creative Media with the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu. Ms. Elmore has also been a lecturer in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa since 2024. She has a heart to equip the next generation of filmmakers and communicators to better serve Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support for the continued service of Ms. Elmore on the HTA Advisory Board of Directors.



**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**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804  
Web site: [dbedt.hawaii.gov](http://dbedt.hawaii.gov)

Telephone: (808) 586-2355  
Fax: (808) 586-2377

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 599**  
**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Advisory Board of Directors  
of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee,  
MERICIA ELMORE, 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 Mericia Elmore's continued service on the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Advisory Board of Directors.

Ms. Elmore brings a combination of legal training, film industry leadership and higher education experience to the Advisory Board. As executive director of SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i Local, she has a strong understanding of the role film and television play in shaping Hawai'i's visibility and appeal as a destination.

She also serves in university-level teaching roles. Since 2016, she has been a senior adjunct professor in the Department of Communication at Hawai'i Pacific University and a lecturer for the Academy for Creative Media at the University of Hawai'i West O'ahu. Since 2024, she has also served as a lecturer in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

Ms. Elmore is a valued member of the Advisory Board, where she actively contributes to several key committees. As part of the Administrative Standing Committee, she oversees the contract terms of the president and chief executive officer and makes informed recommendations regarding their performance evaluations. In her role on the Branding Standing Committee, she provides strategic reviews and evaluations related

to HTA's branding and marketing initiatives, focusing on destination branding as well as meetings, conventions, and incentive businesses.

Additionally, as chair of the Film Tourism Standing Committee, Ms. Elmore leads initiatives that promote Hawai'i through film and television, utilizing integrated marketing strategies to drive economic development and ensure a positive and authentic representation of the state. She also participates in the CEO Search Permitted Interaction Group, which is tasked with the recruitment and hiring of HTA's president and CEO, as well as establishing their contract terms. Her involvement extends to the Governance Study Permitted Interaction Group, where she reviews and offers recommendations based on the final outcomes of the Governance Study.

Lastly, in the Strategic Plan Permitted Interaction Group, she engaged in discussions to evaluate proposed strategies and tactics, contributing valuable recommendations for HTA's strategic plan for the period from 2026 to 2030. Through these diverse roles, Ms. Elmore plays an instrumental part in shaping the strategic direction and initiatives of HTA, underscoring her commitment to advancing Hawai'i's tourism industry. Her experience helps strengthen HTA's work at the intersection of tourism, creative industry development and workforce preparation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Ms. Elmore.

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 4:23:45 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christopher Wiecking	Testifying for IATSE Local 665	Support	In Person

Comments:

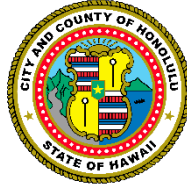
Good afternoon Chair, Vice-Chair and members of the Committee. My name is Christopher Wiecking from IATSE Local 665 and I stand in strong SUPPORT of GM599 for the consideration and nominaton of Mericia Palma-Elmore to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority.

Thank you for time and consideration. Aloha.

HONOLULU FILM OFFICE  
*KE KE'ENA LĪPINE O HONOLULU*  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

530 SOUTH KING ST, ROOM 306 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-6100 • FAX: WEBSITE: honolulu.gov/film-office

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
*MEIA*



WALEA L. CONSTANTINAU  
FILM COMMISSIONER  
*Kominina Līpine*

**LATE**

Testimony of Walea Constantinau,  
Film Commissioner, Honolulu Film Office  
City and County of Honolulu

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

March 31, 2026 1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and via Videoconference

**Testimony in Support**

**RE: GM599 Submitting for consideration to the Advisory Board of Directors of the  
Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee Mericia Elmore**

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice-chair Wakai and members of the committees:

The Honolulu Film Office wholeheartedly supports the nomination of Ms. Mericia Elmore to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Ms. Elmore has extensive experience in the film industry, serving currently as the Executive Director of the Hawai'i Local of SAG-AFTRA and as the Chair of the Hawai'i Film and Entertainment Board. This coupled with her specialized legal expertise in Media Ethics, Intellectual Property and First Amendment law, her communication skills and professional dedication to excellence make her well prepared to serve effectively on the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



March 29, 2026

Senate's Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at 1:00 PM

**RE: Strong Support for Governor's Message 599**

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and fellow committee members,

My name is Michael Golojuch, Jr., and I serve as President of Pride at Work – Hawai'i, a constituency group of the labor movement dedicated to advancing equality and justice for māhū, LGBTQIA+, and QTPI+ workers and all working people. I write in strong support of Governor's Message 599, appointing Mericia Palma Elmore, JD/MLISc, to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board.

I have had the privilege of knowing and working alongside Mericia for nearly a decade through our shared service on the Hawai'i State AFL-CIO Executive Board. Over those years, I have witnessed firsthand her integrity, thoughtfulness, and deep commitment to ensuring that Hawai'i's workers are not only heard but respected in decision-making spaces. Our collaboration has spanned legislative advocacy and broader labor initiatives, where she has consistently demonstrated an ability to build bridges across sectors while staying grounded in the needs of our communities.

Even prior to confirmation, Mericia has already shown the leadership and vision we need on the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board. As Chair of the Film Tourism Committee, she has worked to connect Hawai'i's creative industries with our broader tourism strategy—recognizing that film, television, and media are not just economic drivers, but powerful storytellers. As she has articulated, the Film/TV/Media industry in Hawai'i serves as “the world's longest-running commercial for our home,” shaping how global audiences understand and emotionally connect with our islands. This perspective reflects a nuanced understanding of tourism—one that goes beyond numbers and instead focuses on long-term, respectful engagement with Hawai'i.

Her contributions to the Branding and Administrative Committees further demonstrate her ability to guide how Hawai'i is presented to the world with intention and care. Importantly, she has also been engaged in long-term strategic planning efforts that seek to balance economic growth with the protection of our natural resources and the preservation of our cultural heritage—an approach that aligns deeply with the values of our labor community.

Mericia's professional background as Executive Director of SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i Local, as well as her work as an educator at the University of Hawai'i and Hawai'i Pacific University, underscores her lifelong commitment to workers. She understands that behind every

## Pride at Work – Hawai'i's Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of GM 599

production, every visitor experience, and every economic metric are the people of Hawai'i—our friends, our neighbors, and our families. She brings a critical lens that ensures everyday workers have a voice in shaping the future of tourism in our state.

At a time when we must reimagine tourism in a way that is sustainable, equitable, and worker-centered, Mericia Palma Elmore is exactly the kind of leader we need. Her ability to connect industries, uplift workers, and thoughtfully steward Hawai'i's global image makes her exceptionally well-qualified for this role.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support Governor's Message 599 and confirm Mericia Palma Elmore to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)  
President, [Pride at Work – Hawai'i](#)

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/27/2026 5:28:06 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Henry Fordham	Testifying for IATSE Local 665	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Wholehearted Support.



## HAWAII STATE AFL-CIO

888 Mililani Street, Suite 501 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Telephone: (808) 597-1441 • Fax: (808) 593-2149

March 31, 2026

The Thirty-Third Legislature  
The Senate  
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

**SUBJECT: TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM599 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE ADVISORY BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, MERICIA ELMORE, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029**

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

The Hawaii State AFL-CIO is in strong support of GM599, confirming Mericia Elmore to the Hawaii Tourism Authority Advisory Board (HTA).

Tourism drives a significant portion of Hawaii's economy, and the decisions made by the HTA directly affect working families across the state. Those decisions shape job opportunities, income stability, and the long-term sustainability of the communities where our members live and work.

Ms. Elmore has already demonstrated an understanding of those impacts through her service on the HTA. She understands that the way Hawaii is promoted shapes visitor demand and has real impacts on working families and the people who sustain the industry. Additionally, Ms. Elmore's continued service will provide stability and consistency at a time when the HTA is navigating changes in priorities and direction.

We urge the committee to advance GM599.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randy Perreira".

Randy Perreira  
President  
Hawaii State AFL-CIO

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 9:02:13 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Genaro Hale Gualdarama	Testifying for Hawaii Teamsters Local 996	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stand in support of bill GM599.



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March 29, 2026

RE: SUPPORT FOR GM 599 – CONFIRMATION OF MERICIA PALMA ELMORE

Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Tuesday, March 31, 2026 | 1:00 PM

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

On behalf of SAG-AFTRA and our 160,000 members nationwide — including our dedicated Hawai'i Local — I write in strong support of confirming Mericia Palma Elmore to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board of Directors.

SAG-AFTRA members in Hawai'i are part of a creative workforce that generates one of the state's most valuable tourism assets. Every film and television production shot on the islands reaches millions of viewers worldwide, serving as a powerful, evergreen commercial for Hawai'i. That visibility drives visitor spending, supports local businesses, and creates lasting careers for the crews, performers, and production professionals who call the islands home.

Our members have a direct stake in how the HTA shapes tourism strategy. When the Authority recognizes the connection between Hawai'i's creative industries and its global

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Kerri Wood Einertson

Executive Director, Government Affairs & Public Policy

SAG-AFTRA

SCREEN ACTORS GUILD - AMERICAN FEDERATION OF  
TELEVISION AND RADIO ARTISTS  
SAGAFTRA.org  
Associated Actors & Artistes of America / AFL-CIO



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tourism goals, production spending stays local, workers build sustainable careers, and communities see investment that respects their natural and cultural resources.

Mericia Palma Elmore has demonstrated her understanding of this connection. Since her nomination, she has led as Chair of the Film Tourism Committee, advocated for working people in Hawai'i to have a seat at the table, and helped guide strategic plans that balance economic growth with stewardship of the islands.

Confirming her ensures the HTA continues to reflect the interests of Hawai'i's creative workforce and the communities they serve.

SAG-AFTRA respectfully urges the Committee to recommend confirmation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kerri Wood Einertson

Executive Director, Government Affairs & Public Policy

SAG-AFTRA

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Kerri Wood Einertson

Executive Director, Government Affairs & Public Policy

SAG-AFTRA

SCREEN ACTORS GUILD - AMERICAN FEDERATION OF  
TELEVISION AND RADIO ARTISTS  
SAGAFTRA.org  
Associated Actors & Artistes of America / AFL-CIO



**HAWAII GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION**  
AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO

**RANDY PERREIRA**, Executive Director • Tel: 808.543.0011 • Fax: 808.528.0922

The Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawaii  
The Senate  
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Testimony by  
Hawaii Government Employees Association

March 31, 2026

GM 599 – SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE  
ADVISORY BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY,  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, MERICIA ELMORE, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 6-30-  
2029

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO strongly supports the nomination Mericia Elmore to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Ms. Elmore earned her Juris Doctor degree from the William S. Richardson School of Law. She currently serves as the Executive Director of SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i, where she manages and oversees the union's administration, communications, budgeting, governance, organizing and member outreach, and legislative advocacy. Ms. Elmore is also a Senior Adjunct Professor at Hawai'i Pacific University's College of Liberal Arts. A representative from the film industry will be a valuable asset as Hawai'i-based films help market our state to prospective visitors who seek to contribute to our local economy. The Board will benefit from Ms. Elmore's background as it works to develop an effective, balanced, and sustainable blueprint to support and promote our state's primary economic driver.

We offer our unequivocal support and endorsement of Mericia Elmore's nomination to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and kindly ask the favorable consideration of your committee for her candidacy.

Respectfully submitted,



Randy Perreira  
Executive Director



# HAWAII PORTS MARITIME COUNCIL

affiliated with  
Maritime Trades Department  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR and CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS

606 Kalihii Street Honolulu, Hawaii 96819

TELEPHONE: (808) 845-5222

FAX: (808) 841-1191

March 30, 2026

Member Unions:

**LATE**

Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

*Hawaii Government  
Employees Association,  
AFSCME Local 152*

*Hawaii Pilots Association,  
MM&P Pilots Division*

*Inlandboatmen's Union  
of the Pacific*

*International Brotherhood of  
Boilermakers, Iron Ship  
Builders, Blacksmiths,  
Forgers and Helpers  
Lodge 627*

*International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers Local 1186*

*International Brotherhood of  
Electrical Workers Local 1260*

*International Longshore and  
Warehouse Union Local 142*

*International Union of  
Elevator Constructors  
Local 126*

*Ironworkers Union  
Stabilization Fund  
Local 625*

*Laborers' International Union  
of North America Local 368*

*Marine Engineers'  
Beneficial Association*

*Marine Firemen,  
Watertenders, Oilers & Wipers*

*Masters, Mates and Pilots,  
Offshore Division*

*Sailors' Union of the Pacific*

*Seafarers International Union  
Sheet Metal Workers Local 293*

*United Food and Commercial  
Workers International Union  
Local 480*

RE: GM599 SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE  
ADVISORY BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY,  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, MERICIA ELMORE, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029

Dear Chair, Vice Chair and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Hawaii Ports Maritime Council we strongly support Mericia Elmore to serve a board member to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Ms. Elmore brings proven leadership, legal expertise, and deep experience in Hawai'i's media and creative sectors. As Executive Director of Hawai'i SAG-AFTRA, she oversees operations, budgeting, communications, and member engagement, while building strong relationships across industry, labor, and government.

Her service on the HTA Board has demonstrated her ability to advance thoughtful tourism policy. As Chair of the Film Tourism Committee and a member of the Branding and Administrative Committees, she has helped align Hawai'i's creative industries with tourism strategy while supporting responsible growth and the protection of Hawai'i's cultural and natural resources.

The film and television industry plays a vital role in Hawai'i's visitor economy, shaping how the world experiences and understands our islands. Ms. Elmore's leadership helps ensure these stories reflect and respect Hawai'i while strengthening long-term, sustainable visitation.

With a background in law, public policy, and workforce development, and as an educator at the University of Hawai'i and Hawai'i Pacific University, Ms. Elmore is committed to building opportunity for Hawai'i's workers and ensuring they have a voice in shaping the future of tourism.

Her leadership and commitment to Hawai'i's people and industries make her exceptionally well-qualified to serve.

Therefore, we respectfully urge your support for GM599.

Sincerely,

Randy Swindell  
President

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 7:35:30 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noah Tom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of Mericia Elmore’s confirmation to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority. I have had the privilege of knowing and working alongside Mericia for decades, and I can confidently say that her leadership, integrity, and deep commitment to Hawai‘i’s creative and business communities make her exceptionally well qualified for this role.

Throughout our long-standing professional relationship, I have witnessed firsthand Mericia’s unwavering support of Hawai‘i’s film and advertising industries. She has consistently championed local talent, fostered meaningful partnerships, and helped create opportunities that elevate our creative economy. Her ability to bridge business objectives with authentic storytelling has not only strengthened our industry but has also contributed to how Hawai‘i is represented to the world.

Mericia brings a rare combination of strategic vision, community awareness, and genuine care for the people and industries she serves. She understands the importance of tourism as both an economic driver and a cultural responsibility, and she approaches that balance thoughtfully and with intention. Her voice on the Advisory Board will be one of collaboration, insight, and advocacy for sustainable, locally grounded growth.

I wholeheartedly support Mericia Elmore’s appointment and am confident she will make a meaningful and lasting impact in this role.

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 7:53:32 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jason Cutinella	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in full support!

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/28/2026 1:17:55 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Keith Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Keith Jones and I am a resident of Manoa, a member of the Directors' Guild of America, and I sit on the Hawaii Film Entertainment Board. In the last year I have worked closely with Mericia Elmore and have come to rely on her expertise regarding our local film industry, Hawaii's legislative process, and navigating government agencies. Her professionalism and her demeanor are well suited to every project and task she takes on. I am always impressed with her thoughtfulness and directness when helping with issues that have come up for unions, boards, or legislation. I cannot imagine a person more suited to this position than Mericia Elmore and look forward to seeing her on the HTA board.

March 28, 2026

Aloha,

My name is Gerard Elmore, Vice President of Film at NMG Network and Executive Director of the non-profit local film incubator program, 'Ohina Labs.

I am writing in strong support of my wife's appointment to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board. I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand her love and commitment to Hawai'i.

Since her initial appointment, she has approached this responsibility with integrity, diligence, and a clear sense of purpose. She has brought new energy and new perspectives as Chair of the Film Tourism Committee. She has led meaningful efforts to bridge Hawai'i's creative industries with our broader tourism strategy. She has recognized that storytelling, film, and media are powerful drivers of both economic opportunity and cultural connection. Her leadership in this space has helped position Hawai'i not just as a destination, but as a place where local voices and stories are elevated and respected.

In her roles on the Branding and Administrative Committees, she has contributed a critical perspective on how Hawai'i is represented to the world. She understands that branding is not just about attracting visitors, but about honoring the authenticity of our communities, cultures, and values. Her guidance consistently reflects a balance between global appeal and local integrity.

She has also played an important role in long-term strategic planning, always advocating for a future where economic growth does not come at the expense of our natural environment or cultural heritage. Her approach is grounded in sustainability, accountability, and a deep respect for the people and places that make Hawai'i like no other place in the world.

Beyond her work with the Authority, her professional life reflects a deep and ongoing commitment to service. As Executive Director of the SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i Local, a Lecturer at UH West O'ahu and UH Mānoa, and a Senior Adjunct Professor at HPU, she is dedicated to supporting and uplifting the workers who power Hawai'i's creative economy. She is deeply connected to the community and believes our friends, neighbors, and everyday working people, are stakeholders in Hawai'i's future.

She understands that tourism must work for the people of Hawai'i, not the other way around. That belief, coupled with her experience, leadership, and honesty, makes her an invaluable asset to the Board.

I respectfully urge you to support her continued service on the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board. Hawai'i is stronger when leaders like her are at the table. Leaders who listen to their communities, live to serve, and who lead with purpose.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerard Elmore". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Gerard Elmore

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 10:10:08 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
HENRY IAN CUSICK	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Advisory Board,

I am honored to submit my wholehearted recommendation for Mericia Palma Elmore’s confirmation to the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority Board of Directors. As a distinguished leader—currently serving as Executive Director of SAG-AFTRA, Hawaii Local—and as a tenured educator at both the University of Hawai‘i and Hawaii Pacific University, Mericia brings a rare blend of legal acumen, cultural insight, and tireless advocacy.

Her career is a mosaic of impact: from lobbying at the legislature to teaching intellectual property law, she is a bridge between Hawai‘i’s creative industries and its global aspirations. With awards such as the Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition and years of board service, she embodies the spirit of innovation and stewardship that Hawai‘i’s tourism future demands.

I have every confidence that Mericia’s leadership will enrich the Authority’s vision, ensuring a vibrant, equitable, and sustainable tourism landscape.

Respectfully,  
Henry Ian Cusick  
President Sag Aftra Hawai‘i Local

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 2:28:09 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dana Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support Mericia Elmore for this position. She has been a thoughtful, passionate advocate for Hawai'i and the film industry for a long time. And I have no doubt she will continue to find creative ways to advocate for the state in ways that work to preserve and protect local communities while also bringing in business for the state.

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 2:29:15 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Loretta Ables Sayre	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

MERICIA PALMA ELMORE would be a fantastic member of the Advisory Board of Directors for the Hawaii Tourism Authority. Her background in law, her leadership with SAG/After here in Honolulu and all of her work and living experiences here in Hawaii gives her great insight on what we need to do to move Hawaii's tourism board forward.

You would be very lucky to have her as a member to serve all of us.

**Thirty-Third Legislature, State of Hawai'i**  
**Regular Session of 2026**  
**Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism**

Testimony by IATSE International Trustee Tuia'ana Scanlan  
March 31st, 2026

**GM599 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee, MERICIA ELMORE**

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Senate committee,

My name is Tuia'ana Scanlan, IATSE International Trustee. The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) represents over 170,000 Entertainment technicians and artisans across the US and Canada. **I strongly support GM 599**, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee, MERICIA ELMORE,

Mericia Palma Elmore is a senior adjunct professor at Hawaii Pacific University, a lecturer at UH Manoa and UH-West O'ahu and has diligently served as the Executive Director of SAG-AFTRA Hawaii since 2017. As Chair of the Film Tourism Committee, she has expert knowledge of the film industry on both a microscopic and macroscopic scale. She has the first-hand industry experience necessary for guiding long-term strategic planning to ensure we balance economic growth with the protection of our natural and cultural resources. Her steadfastness, meticulous work ethic, and solid moral compass will serve this state well for many years to come.

**I strongly support GM 599. I urge your committee to do the same.** Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

In Solidarity,

Tuia'ana Scanlan  
IATSE International Trustee  
he/him/his

Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Tuesday, March 31, 2026

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

I **strongly support** the nomination of Mericia Elmore to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. I have known her for over 10 years and can confidently attest to her professional expertise and dedication to our state.

Her extensive background demonstrates a deep commitment to the people and the creative economy of Hawai'i. As the Executive Director for the SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i Local since 2017, she has consistently proven her ability to manage complex operations, oversee budgeting, and build vital relationships with industry stakeholders and government officials. Furthermore, her experience as a founder and attorney at Lotus Law LLLC, combined with her work teaching at institutions like Hawai'i Pacific University and the University of Hawai'i, highlights her strong analytical capabilities and communication skills.

Her comprehensive understanding of public policy, legal issues, and media will bring invaluable, well-rounded insight to the Advisory Board. I respectfully urge the committee to confirm her nomination.

Sincerely,

Jason Bradshaw

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/29/2026 9:06:10 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sharla Hanaoka	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Mericia Palma Elmore and her nomination to serve on the Hawaii Tourism Authority Advisory Board of Directors.

I have had the opportunity to work with Mericia over the past decade through my role in higher education, where she has served as a lecturer teaching Creative Professionals. In that capacity, I have observed her professionalism, expertise, and commitment to preparing students for real-world practice. As an intellectual property attorney, she brings a critical perspective on ownership, rights, and ethical use—areas that are increasingly important in today’s creative and tourism landscapes.

What stands out most about Mericia is her ability to navigate the intersection of creativity, law, and responsibility. She understands that Hawai‘i’s stories, culture, and creative assets are not just content—they are deeply rooted in community and require thoughtful stewardship. Her background positions her well to contribute to impactful conversations, cultural representation, and the responsible use of intellectual and cultural resources.

She is thoughtful, measured, and grounded in her approach, and she brings a strong sense of integrity to her work. Over the years, I have seen her consistently show up for students and the broader community, helping to shape individuals who will contribute to Hawai‘i’s future workforce and creative economy.

I believe Mericia would be a valuable and principled voice on the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority Advisory Board of Directors, and I strongly support her nomination.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Sharla Hanaoka

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 3:24:05 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Vilsoni Hereniko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm in strong support of Mericia Palma Elmore's confirmation.

We need her skills, experience, and dedication to continue serving Hawai'i and its people.

Aloha

I am writing in strong support of Mericia Palma Elmore's confirmation under GM 599.

In my experience as a member of the theatre arts and film industry, Mericia is a deeply committed advocate for Hawai'i's film industry. She knows the community, its people, challenges and potential and shows up with integrity and care.

She genuinely believes in the power of film to shape and sustain Hawai'i's tourism in a meaningful, lasting way.

In her role as Executive Director of SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i, she remains closely attuned to the current concerns, opportunities, and challenges facing the industry. She works across every level of the industry, advocating at the Legislature, being present on film and television sets to ensure best practices, and guiding a union of actors with steady, thoughtful leadership.

This real-time understanding brings invaluable insight to the table, as the Hawai'i Tourism Authority navigates its partnership opportunities with the creative sector and broader industries.

As a lawyer, she bridges the worlds of policy and creative practice with clarity and purpose, strengthening the connection between Hawai'i's creative industries and a more responsible, forward-looking tourism model.

I can think of no one more knowledgeable, reliable, skilled or passionate about the intersection of film, Hawai'i, and tourism than Mericia.

I respectfully urge your support.

Mahalo,

Annie Cusick Wood

*Film Producer (The Tourist Curse) and Playwright*

*Artistic Associate, Honolulu Theatre for Youth*

*Board Member, Hawai'i Education of the Arts (HEARTS)*

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 10:46:33 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ciara Leinaala Kwock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism,

I am writing to offer my strong support for the confirmation of Mericia Palmore Elmore under GM 599. Mericia has already demonstrated a deep commitment to serving Hawai‘i with thoughtfulness, integrity, and a clear sense of purpose, and I believe her continued presence on the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority Board will be of great benefit to our communities.

In her time on the Board, Mericia has brought a rare combination of strategic insight and genuine care for the people and places that make Hawai‘i unique. Her leadership as Chair of the Film Tourism Committee reflects a forward-thinking approach to how Hawai‘i is represented globally. She understands that film, television, and media are not just industries—they are powerful storytelling tools that shape how the world sees and engages with our home. Her work recognizes the responsibility that comes with that visibility and seeks to align it with values of respect, stewardship, and authenticity.

Beyond her committee leadership, Mericia’s contributions to the Branding and Administrative Committees, as well as her role in long-term strategic planning, demonstrate her ability to think holistically about Hawai‘i’s future. She consistently advocates for a balanced approach—one that supports economic vitality while protecting the cultural and natural resources that are foundational to Hawai‘i’s identity.

Equally important is her deep connection to the local creative community. Through her work as Executive Director of SAG-AFTRA Hawai‘i Local and as an educator at UH West O‘ahu, UH Mānoa, and Hawai‘i Pacific University, Mericia is actively investing in the next generation while uplifting the voices of those currently working in the industry. She brings the perspectives of everyday people—our friends, neighbors, and workers—into conversations that shape the future of tourism, ensuring that development is not only sustainable, but inclusive.

Mericia approaches this work with humility, respect, and a sincere reverence for Hawai‘i. Her continued service on the Board would provide stability, vision, and a strong advocate for responsible storytelling and tourism practices.

I respectfully urge the Committee to support her confirmation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Ciara Kwock

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 11:45:43 AM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kim Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the nomination of Mericia Palma Elmore to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board. Her knowledge and experience will be of benefit to the board. Please give her your support for this nomination.

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 12:23:05 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Zoe Eisenberg	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I am writing my in support of Mericia Palma Elmore’s confirmation to the HTA advisory board. Through her various work with SAG-AFTRA Hawai’i Local, UH West O’ahu, UH Mānoa, HPU and more, Mericia has always warmly championed our community’s creative industries, and I look forward to hopefully seeing how she continues to serve HTA’s mission in the future.**

**LATE**

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 1:04:48 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeannette P Hereniko	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Testimony in SUPPORT of GM 599**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority, Gubernatorial Nominee, MERICIA ELMORE, for a term to expire 06-30-2029

Chair and Members of the Committee:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jeannette Paulson Hereniko, and I reside in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. I am writing in strong support of the confirmation of Mericia Palma Elmore to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority.

I have known Mericia Palma Elmore for more than three decades, having worked with her as a colleague in Hawai‘i’s film industry. Our professional relationship spans multiple contexts, including her work with the Hawai‘i International Film Festival, where she provided seminars as an entertainment lawyer to local filmmakers and producers; her active participation in Hawai‘i Women in Filmmaking, where she contributed to policy discussions and organizational development; her collaboration as part of a producing team on film projects for Hawai‘i-based filmmakers; and her role as an attorney on my own film projects. In all of these experiences, I have consistently found that Mericia brings a rare combination of legal expertise, thoughtful judgment, and deep commitment to Hawai‘i’s creative community. Her knowledge, skills, wisdom, and collaborative spirit have enriched every endeavor she has been part of.

As the Founding Director of the Hawai‘i International Film Festival, I have seen firsthand the extraordinary power of film and television in shaping global perceptions of Hawai‘i. The film and media industries function, in effect, as enduring ambassadors—creating images that invite the world to know our islands. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, as I traveled to film festivals in major cities and remote regions alike, I was repeatedly asked if I knew Jack Lord and whether Hawai‘i was truly as beautiful as it appeared in Hawai‘i Five-O. This was not an occasional question—it was a constant refrain over many years, demonstrating the lasting influence of screen storytelling on tourism and on Hawai‘i’s global identity.

Mericia Elmore is exceptionally well qualified to represent this vital intersection of creative industry and tourism. In her current service on the Hawai'i Tourism Authority advisory board, she has taken on leadership responsibilities that reflect both vision and practical impact. She has helped guide efforts that connect Hawai'i's creative sectors more directly with tourism strategy, contributed to discussions about how Hawai'i is represented and understood worldwide, and participated in long-term planning that seeks a thoughtful balance between economic development and the stewardship of Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources.

Her broader professional life reflects a deep and ongoing commitment to the people of Hawai'i's creative industries. Through her leadership within the performers' union community and her work as an educator at multiple local institutions of higher learning, she is engaged daily with those who make their livelihoods in this field. She understands that tourism is not an abstract concept, but one that directly affects our friends, neighbors, and working communities. Her perspective helps ensure that those voices are included in shaping Hawai'i's future.

For all of these reasons, I strongly support the confirmation of Mericia Palma Elmore. She brings experience, integrity, and a grounded understanding of both industry and community that will serve the Hawai'i Tourism Authority well.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeannette Paulson Hereniko  
Honolulu, Hawai'i

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 2:42:48 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian L Keaulana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Brian Keaulana, and I am writing in strong support of the confirmation of Mericia Palma Elmore to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board.

I have had the opportunity to witness Mericia's deep commitment to Hawai'i's people, culture, and creative industries. Through her work as Executive Director of SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i Local, as well as her roles at UH West O'ahu, UH Mānoa, and Hawai'i Pacific University, Mericia has consistently championed opportunities for local talent and advocated for storytelling that reflects Hawai'i authentically.

Her leadership on the HTA Film Tourism Committee has strengthened the connection between Hawai'i's creative industries and our state's tourism vision. She understands that film, television, and media are not just about entertainment — they are vital tools for shaping how the world perceives Hawai'i. Her thoughtful approach ensures that we share stories that encourage respectful, responsible, and enduring relationships between visitors and our islands.

Mericia brings a unique blend of practical experience, cultural sensitivity, and visionary thinking. She represents the kind of balanced, community-rooted leadership that will help the HTA continue its important work of aligning tourism with the long-term well-being of the land and people of Hawai'i.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to confirm Mericia Palma Elmore to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board under GM 599.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to provide testimony in support.

Sincerely,

Brian Keaulana

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 3:06:38 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Lee Mitchell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Lisa Lee Mitchell and I am a member of IATSE 665 and the Hawaii Film Alliance. I am in strong support of Mericia Palma Elmore to the Advisory Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. I have known Mericia many years professionally as well as personally and know that she would be an incredible asset to this board.

Thank you,

Lisa Lee Mitchell

**LATE**

**GM-599**

Submitted on: 3/30/2026 9:20:32 PM

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

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jason Suapaia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jason Suapaia, and I am writing in strong support of Mericia Palma Elmore (known to many of us as Mernie).

I've known Mernie for over 20 years, going back to my time as President of 1013 Integrated and through our shared work and relationships across Hawai'i's film and media community. Over that time, I've come to know not just her professional contributions, but her character.

Mernie leads with a strong sense of integrity and accountability. She's thoughtful in how she approaches decisions, takes the time to understand different perspectives, and doesn't shy away from difficult conversations when they matter.

By training, she is a lawyer, but she is also deeply connected to the creative community. Through her work and her leadership as Executive Director of SAG-AFTRA Hawai'i, she has been a consistent advocate for the people in our industry. She understands the business, the creative process, and the real challenges of living and working in Hawai'i.

I've also known her husband for many years as a filmmaker and producer, and through that connection, I've seen how grounded and embedded they both are in this community. They understand what it means to be part of Hawai'i—its culture, its people, and the responsibility that comes with representing it.

From my perspective, having spent more than 25 years working in Hawai'i's creative industries across production, communications, and brand strategy, I can say that Mernie brings the experience, judgment, and perspective this role calls for. She understands how our creative industries intersect with tourism, economic development, and cultural representation, and approaches that balance with care.

She is someone I trust, someone this community respects, and someone who will serve with integrity.

I fully support her nomination.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Jason Suapaia