



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. 600
CONFIRMATION OF GRANT TABURA
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 Grant "Lanai" Tabura's nomination to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Advisory Board of Directors. As a member of HTA's Advisory Board, Mr. Tabura currently serves as vice chair of the Sports Tourism Standing Committee, which focuses on advancing Hawai'i's position as a premier sports tourism destination, leveraging events to drive economic impact, brand visibility and community benefit.

Mr. Tabura is the consummate ambassador for Hawai'i. His contributions to the HTA Advisory Board are valuable for us because of his deep understanding and appreciation of Hawai'i's culture and history, which he merges with his experience as a radio and TV host. He has successfully combined his love of food with his storytelling, earning multiple Emmy Awards for his show, "Cooking Hawaiian Style."

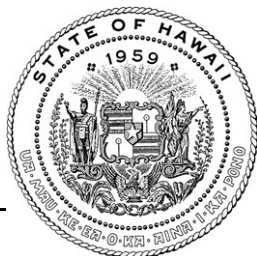
He is a natural spokesperson, here in Hawai'i and abroad. He served as spokesperson for organizations in various markets, including Tourism Authority Malaysia, Tourism Authority Thailand, Tourism Authority Portugal, and Tourism Authority Philippines. More recently, Mr. Tabura has served as a spokesperson for HTA's sports marketing initiatives.

Mr. Tabura's deep roots in the islands are evident in the way he gives back to Hawai'i's people. He organized food drives in Lāna'i City, where he was raised, to provide essential support during the COVID-19 pandemic. He also co-founded the Show Aloha Challenge, a nonprofit that raised funds for Hawai'i's restaurants to help them stay open during the pandemic and feed vulnerable kūpuna.

His aloha extends to Japan as well. He co-founded Aloha for Japan and helped develop a team that raised \$13 million to support children who lost their parents in the devastating Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami in 2011.

In summary, we support Mr. Tabura's nomination and believe he will continue to be a valuable contributor to 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

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

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 600
**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Advisory Board of Directors
of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, gubernatorial nominee,
GRANT TABURA, 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 Grant "Lanai" Tabura's nomination to serve as a member of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Advisory Board of Directors.

Mr. Tabura has long served as an ambassador for Hawai'i through storytelling, media and community service. His work as a radio and television host, together with his knowledge of Hawai'i's culture and history, gives him a distinctive voice in support of authentic destination representation.

He has also served as a spokesperson for tourism organizations in international markets, including Malaysia, Thailand, Portugal and the Philippines, and more recently has supported HTA's sports marketing initiatives. His experience communicating across markets has been valuable to the HTA.

Mr. Tabura's record of giving back to Hawai'i's communities, including organizing food drives on Lāna'i during the COVID-19 pandemic and co-founding the Show Aloha Challenge, reflects a deep commitment to service.

As a member of HTA's Advisory Board, Mr. Tabura serves as vice chair of the Sports Tourism Standing Committee, which advances Hawai'i's position as a premier

DBEDT Testimony

GM 600

Page 2 of 2

destination for sports-related travel and events and provides strategic guidance on initiatives that leverage sports tourism to drive economic impact, enhance the destination's brand, support partnerships, and strengthen community well-being.

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