



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

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

Tuesday, March 31, 2026
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of
HCR50/HR46
**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
AND TOURISM TO ESTABLISH A DESTINATION MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE.**

Chair Tam, Vice Chair Templo, and members of the Committee:

I respectfully **oppose** HCR50/HR46, which requests the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to establish a destination management task force.

HTA has already developed and implemented Destination Management Action Plans (DMAPs) for all four counties through a community-driven process aligned with HTA's 2020–2025 Strategic Plan. These plans address responsible visitor behavior, overcrowding at popular sites and the protection of natural and cultural resources, and were developed through a collaborative process with a Steering Committee and shaped by input from residents, businesses, government agencies and community organizations. HTA is now finalizing the next iteration of DMAPs in partnership with state and county agencies, community organizations and island-specific Advisory Groups.

Following the passage of Act 132, HTA has also strengthened its governance structure, including the creation of the Ho'okahua Hawai'i standing committee and new

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committees for sports and film tourism. These bodies support destination stewardship, cultural perpetuation, workforce development and enhancement of visitor experiences.

HTA's FY 2026 priorities include:

- Strengthening and diversifying tourism's overall contribution to Hawai'i's economy through coordinated, market-appropriate branding and marketing activities with HTA's global marketing team, including increasing demand for sustainable, regenerative and experiential travel.
- Advancing destination stewardship for Hawai'i, including growing HTA's sports portfolio to increase exposure of the Hawaiian Islands and support Hawai'i's communities and youth through professional sporting events, building the capacity of small businesses and community organizations and maintaining a destination management app to manage tourism impacts.
- Improving interagency, visitor industry and community coordination and collaboration in destination management, workforce development, creative industries, DBEDT's Hawai'i Made program and agritourism.

With Act 132, the Governor and Legislature have already provided the framework for HTA to carry out its mandate to manage tourism in a sustainable and culturally grounded manner. Establishing a new task force may duplicate existing efforts and divert resources from ongoing DMAP implementation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose HCR50/HR46. If the measure advances, staffing responsibilities for the task force must be clearly defined.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



TESTIMONY OF
Caroline Anderson
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

Tuesday, March 31, 2026
10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 423 and Videoconference

In consideration of
HCR 50 / HR 46
**REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND
TOURISM TO ESTABLISH A DESTINATION MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE.**

Aloha Chair Tam, Vice Chair Templo, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) respectfully opposes HCR 50 / HR 46, which requests the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to establish a Destination Management Task Force.

HTA appreciates the intent of this resolution—to strengthen coordination and partnership, which is consistent with HTA's development and implementation of Destination Management Plans (DMAPs) for each county, consistent with its statutory responsibilities (HRS §201B-3, §201B-6.4).

However, the core functions envisioned for the proposed task force are already being carried out through HTA's existing destination management structure.

In summer 2025, HTA established DMAP Advisory Groups for each island. These advisory groups include representatives from island communities, the visitor industry, and state and county government officials. They meet regularly and have played a central role in:

- Identifying and prioritizing visitor "hotspots"—areas experiencing intersecting pressures on natural and cultural resources.
- Recommending and advancing actions to mitigate visitor impacts.
- Providing continuous community-based guidance on destination management.

The DMAPs were developed through extensive statewide community and industry engagement. This foundational work created the same collaborative framework that a new task force would seek to build. Furthermore, the island-specific advisory groups are tailored to each island's unique needs, and replacing or duplicating them with a statewide task force would reduce local representation and nuance.

HTA has also met with numerous state and county officials to coordinate support for implementing DMAP actions. These partnerships form an active, functioning network of agencies and stakeholders to work together on visitor management issues. Standing up a new task force would duplicate this work and could delay progress by diverting time and resources away from implementation.

Additionally, HTA's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan, approved by the HTA advisory board and the DBEDT Director, includes a tactic to develop memorandums of understanding with state and county agencies to further strengthen interagency collaboration. This formalizes the very coordination the resolution seeks to create.

HTA, as the state's agency charged with destination management responsibilities, is establishing structures and partnerships needed to fulfill this work. Creating a new task force would require additional state resources for administration and coordination without providing added benefit, particularly as HTA's destination management actions are now transitioning into implementation.

HTA remains committed to ongoing, community-driven destination management in partnership with DBEDT, state and county agencies, the visitor industry, communities, and residents across the Hawaiian Islands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide our comments in opposition.

March 30, 2026

Re: Testimony for

HCR 188/HR178/

HCR51/HR47/

HCR50/HR 46

HCR 49

HCR 48

TO: COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

Rep. Adrian K. Tam, Chair – Rep Shirley Ann Templo, Vice Chair
Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Reb. Kyle T. Yamashita, Rep. Greggor Hagan, Rep Joe Gedeon

The listed Agenda for March 31st, 2026, at 10:00 am for the Committee on Tourism is a priority for the State of Hawai`i. Each of these bills is favorable for tourism and facilitates sustainable development. I personally agree that tourism is our breadbasket for our people, their families, and their businesses. The employment that tourism supports is equal to our most important economic assets.

Please pass in Committee today for each hearing on this agenda. Hawai`i Tourism Authority is a respected State of Hawaii frontrunner that has delivered expert development and sustainable progress. They have created marketing for Hawai`i as the eighth most desirable destination. in the world. It may be the eighth or tenth in the world, and it matters for all of us.

Mahalo for your consideration. The time for support of TOURISM IS NOW.

Aloha

Marie Agular

P.O. Box 1874, Kailua Kona, Hawai`i 96745

Tourism writer and community events enthusiast

