



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
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Statement of
JENNIFER CHUN
ACTING ADMINISTRATOR
Research and Economic Analysis Division,
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Thursday, February 19, 2026
10:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
SB2577 SD1
RELATING TO SPORTS TOURISM.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports and offers comments on SB2577, which requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to conduct a study of the potential economic benefits and costs of sports tourism in the State.

Sports tourism generates economic activity for regions through a variety of sports events combined with tourism spending. This supports jobs, generates tax revenue, and creates a ripple effect for the rest of the economy. According to a recent report, direct spending in the U.S. for sports tourism was \$47.1 billion in 2024 with the top states being California, Texas, and Florida.¹

Currently, data does not exist for the scope of analysis outlined in the bill. DBEDT would recommend hiring a research firm with related experience. We estimate the scope of the research outlined in this bill could be in excess of \$350,000.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

¹ Sports Event and Tourism Association (2024). Sports ETA State of the Industry Report: Spectator Sports Tourism. <https://research.sportseta.org/>



TESTIMONY OF
CAROLINE ANDERSON
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Tuesday, February 19, 2026
10:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 211

In consideration of
SB 2577 SD1
RELATING TO SPORTS TOURISM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) supports SB 2577 SD1, which directs the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to conduct a study on the potential benefits and costs of sports tourism in Hawai'i.

Sports tourism can bring visitors during shoulder seasons, support local jobs, and strengthen our visitor economy. To guide future decisions, the State benefits from clear, consistent information about outcomes, costs, and community impacts.

HTA supports this measure because the study can provide timely data that strengthens planning and helps maximize return on investment (ROI) for sports tourism-related efforts. HTA would use the findings on event types, infrastructure impacts, and visitor spending to guide future prioritization and performance measurement. Specifically, HTA would use the data to do the following:

- Target the right opportunities. Identify sports events and markets that are more likely to attract higher-spending visitors, longer stays, and strong alignment with Hawai'i's capacity and community priorities.
- Measure net benefit. Compare the full costs of hosting events—such as infrastructure, public safety, staffing, and operations—alongside visitor spending and other measurable benefits.
- Strengthen coordination. Support alignment with DBEDT, counties, venues, and partners to focus resources on shared goals and reduce duplication.
- Enhance accountability. Apply consistent performance measures—such as visitor spending, occupancy impacts, and related outcomes—to track results from sports-related efforts.
- Support balanced decision-making. Pair economic findings with community impact considerations so that future actions support quality of life and visitor experience.

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HTA believes that having this complete picture will help the State prioritize opportunities that are strategic, measurable, and responsible.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2577 SD1.

SB-2577-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 5:41:26 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/19/2026 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Kagamida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT!!

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Thursday, February 19, 2026 – 10:30 AM

**Hawai'i Bicycling League SUPPORTS SB 2577, SD1, Relating to Sports Tourism
With Comments**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Committee Members,

My name is Eduardo Hernandez, and I am the Advocacy Director for the Hawai'i Bicycling League (HBL). We are a non-profit organization founded in 1975 with the mission of enabling more people to ride bicycles for health, recreation, and transportation. We strive to create communities across our islands that have safe, accessible, and inclusive environments for people to bike, walk, and roll.

HBL supports SB2577, SD1, which directs the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to conduct a study on the potential benefits and costs of sports tourism in Hawai'i.

For decades, HBL has worked to present the largest bicycling events in Hawai'i. We also work with national and international partners, including producers of prestigious annual events like the Five Boro Bike Tour in New York City, and the Shimanami Kaido, which connects the prefectures of Ehime and Hiroshima in Japan. The infrastructure for these events are the existing highways and bridges, which are re-purposed for a few hours on the event days to be exclusively for bicycle participants.

In New York, 32,000 riders cycle a forty-mile route around the City, including along the East River, past the United Nations and across the entrance to New York Harbor, high atop the Verrazano Bridge. The Shimanami Kaido is one of Japan's most famous and visually stunning bike routes through the islands of the Seto Inland Sea, with a 70K distance that riders can do in one or more days.

We bring these details to your attention as you consider funding a sports tourism study for Hawai'i, because it is vital that DBEDT work collaboratively with other state agencies like HDOT, HTA, HCDA, DOH, DOE and community organizations like HBL to illuminate the role of the bicycle and bicycling. A bicycle and integrated bicycle networks and programming offer solutions that make us globally competitive for visitors, and also improves the quality of life for residents.

We urge you to pass this bill and ensure that the planned sports tourism study considers the natural and existing infrastructure Hawai'i has to be a world-class bicycling destination.

S/Eduardo Hernandez
Advocacy Director
Hawai'i Bicycling League