

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS
and
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
and
EDUCATION

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
1:05 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2807
RELATING TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Senate Bill 2807 proposes to transfer functions relating to the preparation and implementation of destination management action plans (DMAP) from the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department). Appropriate moneys to the Department to develop and implement destination management action plans and to the Department of Education's Workforce Development Branch for various destination management-related workforce development activities. **The Department has serious concerns with this measure and provides the following comments.**

This measure would transfer all rights, powers, functions, and duties of HTA relating to the development and implementation of destination management plans to the Department. While the Department has had some notable success in the realm of destination management - lauded examples include the Hā'ena State Park community management paradigm, and the Division of Forestry and Wildlife's Pololū Trailhead management program - the Department is not suited to expand efforts outside of its jurisdiction into county and private lands. The Department's staff is largely comprised of experts in natural sciences, natural resource management, and other closely related areas of expertise commonly

associated with its mission to enhance, protect, and conserve Hawai'i's unique and limited natural, cultural, and historic resources.

The Department values HTA's leadership on the Island-specific DMAPs and has willingly participated in these collaborative efforts with State, County and private sector entities that approach destination management holistically. The Department supports this continued approach. HTA has been at the forefront of managing Hawai'i's tourism industry, including destination management, for nearly thirty years. If the Legislature finds that HTA needs additional funding or support to effectively manage the DMAP program, the Department respectfully requests that the Legislature work with HTA to bolster its capacity, rather than transferring these duties to the Department.

The Department stands ready to provide its natural, cultural, and historic resource management expertise to support HTA in its destination management functions to the extent that doing so does not interfere with the Department's ability to carry out its resource management mission.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 02/17/2026

Time: 01:05 PM

Location: CR 229 & Videoconference

Committee: WLA/EDT/EDU

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: SB2807, RELATING TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT.

Purpose of Bill: Transfers functions relating to the preparation and implementation of destination management action plans from the Hawaii Tourism Authority to the Department of Land and Natural Resources. Appropriates moneys to the Department of Land and Natural Resources to develop and implement destination management action plans. Appropriates moneys to the Department of Education's Workforce Development Branch for various destination management-related workforce development activities.

Department's Position:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) offers comments on SB 2807. The Department understands the importance of tourism to Hawai'i's economy and is committed to helping to build a sustainable pipeline to the destination management workforce to support the State's initiatives to attract more visitors to the state and enhance the visitor experience in a manner that respects and preserves Hawai'i's culture and natural resources.

The Department defers to the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Hawai'i Tourism Authority with regards to the amendments outlined in Sections 1 through 5 and the implementation of Sections 6 through 8.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure and for your continued support of the Department's workforce development initiatives and adult education program.



TESTIMONY OF
CAROLINE ANDERSON
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
**SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS, ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, and EDUCATION**

Tuesday, February 17, 2026
1:05 p.m.
State Capitol, Room 229
In consideration of

SB 2807
RELATING TO DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Aloha Chairs Lee, DeCoite, and Kim, Vice Chairs Inouye, Wakai, and Kidani, and Members of the Committees:

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) respectfully opposes SB 2807, which proposes to shift primary responsibility for county destination management action plans to the Department of Land and Natural Resources and appropriates funds to DLNR and the Department of Education.

We appreciate the legislature's continued support for building the infrastructure and governance we need to sharpen Hawai'i's competitive advantages in global tourism. SB 2807 proposes splitting HTA's functions to focus on marketing; however, such a split undermines the holistic approach needed for effective destination management. Momentum has been building since the 2021 Destination Management Action Plans (DMAPs), with community voices central to addressing tourism impacts through collaboration with counties and state agencies.

According to DBEDT's 2025 Spring Resident Sentiment Survey, "More residents now acknowledge efforts to better manage tourism and balance tourism's benefits with everyday quality-of-life aspects. Further, perceptions of having a voice in tourism decisions have inched up but remain weak, signaling the need for stronger community engagement." Restarting this process under a fragmented structure disconnects our communities from tourism, erodes trust, and delays solutions that residents and visitors expect.

Managing tourism requires consistency between what is promoted and what communities can support. Destination management achieves this through a collaborative approach that includes brand marketing, which entails the development of visitor experiences, tourism product development, hotspot management, visitor education and safety, and collaboration with our visitor industry and community. A cohesive strategy is vital for managing tourism impacts. SB 2807 separates these functions, weakening the ability to manage tourism impacts effectively.

DLNR's mission is conservation and protection of natural, cultural, and historic resources, not economic development or visitor system coordination. Assigning it destination management

responsibilities stretches beyond its core mandate. HTA is concerned that DLNR is not structured or resourced to lead economic development or coordinate visitor systems. For example, draft DMAPs for 2026 – 2030 will address issues like:

- sudden congestion at popular sites
- unplanned detours into neighborhoods
- trespassing driven by guidebook shortcuts and social media
- long lines at places with aging facilities
- fragmented messaging

These issues are best addressed through an integrated approach that includes visitor education messaging, coordination and cooperation among multiple agencies and the visitor industry, and collaboration with our tourism sector to improve processes. A single coordinating entity, the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, is essential to effectively lead these efforts.

SB 2807 would also appropriate funds to the Department of Education's Workforce Development Branch for various destination management-related workforce development activities. Workforce development plays a key role in upskilling and reskilling Hawai'i's workforce, providing opportunities for career advancement and economic stability while promoting a resilient, locally rooted workforce that benefits all of Hawai'i. We are concerned that moving tourism investment into the Department of Education will diminish the coordinated effort intended to be driven by the Hawaii Tourism Authority. However, we support this investment and will collaborate with the Department of Education (DOE) to ensure that HTA workforce development programs align with the DOE initiatives established by this bill, maximizing Hawai'i's investment in jobs and education.

While HTA supports the expanded workforce development initiatives in SB 2807, we urge the Committee to keep destination management under one entity, HTA, and instead strengthen HTA's mandate by providing HTA with the tools and resources necessary for flexibility in brand marketing, destination stewardship, and oversight of the Hawaii Convention Center.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our comments in opposition to SB 2807.

OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NALANI BRUN, DIRECTOR



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Testimony of Nalani Ka'auwai Brun
Director, Office of Economic Development
County of Kauai

Before the Senate Committees on
Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
Economic Development and Tourism
Education

February 17, 2026-1:05pm
Conference Room 229 & Video Conference

Re: SB 2807 – Relating to Destination Management

Honorable Chairs Lee, DeCoite, Mercado Kim, Vice Chairs, and Members of the Committees:

I respectfully oppose SB 2807 as currently drafted.

Tourism is more than natural resources. While DLNR plays a critical role in protecting our land and cultural sites, destination management cannot be reduced to a land management function.

SB 2807 transfers Destination Management Action Plans from the Hawai'i Tourism Authority to DLNR. However, tourism management touches transportation, housing, infrastructure, public safety, workforce development, and community well-being. These responsibilities are shared across multiple state agencies and all counties. Effective destination management requires structured coordination across those entities — not placement within a single department.

DLNR already carries a substantial and complex mandate. Adding statewide destination management authority risks narrowing what should be a cross-agency coordinating role.

That said, I strongly support the bill's recognition that destination management requires dedicated funding. Appropriating resources to implement and update DMAPs is both necessary and appropriate. Destination management cannot succeed without stable funding. I would encourage the Legislature to preserve this investment while reconsidering the proposed transfer of authority.

Tourism governance should strengthen integration and stability — not continue shifting responsibilities from agency to agency.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committees to defer SB 2807 in its current form.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Ko`olau Foundation

P. O. Box 4749 / 46-005 Kawa St., #205
Kane`ohe, HI 96744

February 16, 2026

To: Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine Inouye, Vice Chair
& Members

From: Mahealani Cypher, President

Re: S.B. 2807 – Relating to Destination Management – SUPPORT W/ CONCERNS

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Committee Members:

The Ko` supports Senate Bill 2807, which would transfer functions from the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the Department of Education.

While we believe this proposal has merit, we are concerned that the focus on maintaining the health of our visitor industry may be diluted by moving it from HTA to DLNR. The department of land and natural resources has such a broad kuleana to safeguard our natural and cultural resources, and many of their divisions are short-staffed and under-funded, this poses a special challenge to the department. And even if you provide DLNR with funding for more staffing, the State Human Resources Department seems to be unable to expedite filling of vacancies – hence so many vacancies statewide.

We do appreciate the idea of encouraging the DOE to explore or implement workforce training for visitor industry fields, where employment opportunities may open up for high school students – many of whom have to work to help their families in Hawai`i's high cost of living.

We urge your support for this legislation.

Mahalo for your consideration of our mana`o.



COMMITTEE ON WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Senator Chris Lee, Chair

Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair

Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

February 17, 2026

Strongly Oppose SB2807

Aloha Chairs Lee and DeCoite, Vice Chairs Inouye and Wakai, and Committee Members,

My name is Antoinette Davis, and I have had the honor of serving as Executive Director of the Activities and Attractions Association of Hawai'i (A3H), a 501(c)(6) not-for-profit trade organization, since 1997. A3H **strongly opposes** the establishment of a Division of Destination Management within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

DLNR is already overextended and should not be tasked with managing Destination Management Action Plans (DMAPs). As an active member of the Maui DMAP committee and based on years of experience observing DLNR's challenges with limited funding and staffing, assigning DLNR this additional responsibility is not advisable. DMAPs is a critically important function of addressing resident issues with tourism.

If the intent is to strengthen destination management and address issues related to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, we believe other measures provide a more appropriate approach, including **SB2907** and **HB2447**.

Mahalo for your time, consideration, and the opportunity to testify.

Toni

Toni Marie Davis
Executive Director
Activities & Attractions Association of Hawaii, Inc.
Statewide 501 (c) (6) not-for-profit Trade Association
PO Box 598, Makawao, Hawaii 96768
(808)871-7947

SB-2807

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 8:41:34 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/17/2026 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Scott Turner	Testifying for Maui-Molokai Sea Cruises	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

As family owned business with over 40 years of providing gainful income to our residents, it is difficult to sit back and watch decisions being made that are destroying the essence of Aloha that until recent years has been the prime reason visitors love coming here. Why do we continue to send a message to visitors, whom we in the past have appreciated, that they are not welcome anymore? Why do we continue to introduce bills which if passed will deny our families the opportunity to stay right here at home, and earn a good living working in an industry that has provided for all of us for decades. Tourism is the economic engine that drives opportunities that will keep our families home where they were raised, to pursue careers right here. Of course responsible tourism is important, but do we not realize that if reckless decisions continue to prevail, resulting in costs so high that the visitors will just stop coming, there will no longer be the revenues to continue to maintain our resources, in the long term? I am sorry, but adding additional layers of bureaucratic oversight, will result in restricting HTA's ability to effectively market Hawai'i. Increasing taxes and surcharges, to an already overpriced visitor market, sends a clear signal to previously loyal returning visitors and their families, that they are not welcome here, and the islands are only for the wealthy. It is sad to witness the short sighted decision makers who continue to support decisions that will ultimately destroy our economy, and cause our children to move to the maninland, to pursue their livelihoods, because there are no jobs here for them right here at home.



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

McKinley Community School for Adults
634 Pensacola St., Room 216
Honolulu, Hawaii 96814

February 13, 2026

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair
Senator Michelle N. Kidani, Vice Chair
Committee on Education

Senator Chris Lee, Chair
Senator Lorraine R. Inouye, Vice Chair
Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Aloha Senators:

McKinley Community School for Adults (MCSA), **strongly supports** Senate Bill 2807, which will provide essential funding and staffing to strengthen our Workforce Development program through the implementation of Career Foundations as a comprehensive curriculum across core and emerging industries. Career Foundations is a holistic initiative designed to equip students with the academic, professional, and life skills necessary for long-term career success.

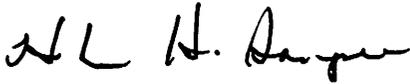
This funding will also expand collaborative workforce training and preparation efforts, including our "Build Your Bank," "Build Your Biz," and "Build Your Farm" programs, in partnership with the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, the Department of Human Services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and other state agencies and community partners.

In addition, our Career Foundations programs are prepared to support Hawaii State Department of Education high schools and special education departments by offering a digital financial literacy curriculum that strengthens students' understanding of key concepts such as budgeting, saving, investing, and responsible borrowing. Financial literacy is especially critical as students navigate Hawaii's rising cost of living and work to develop sound financial habits. MCSA's Career Foundations program fosters the mindset and practical skills students need to build stable, self-sufficient futures.

Education and workforce development are central to Hawaii's economic vitality. MCSA currently provides workforce training and preparation services across Oahu, Kauai, Maui, Molokai, and Lanai, as well as within Department of Public Safety correctional facilities statewide.

As leaders of our school and campuses, we sincerely appreciate your consideration and support to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality educational services to the people of Hawaii. We respectfully request the establishment of *two full-time equivalent (2.0 FTE) positions within McKinley Community School for Adults, along with \$250,000 in funding for other current expenses, to advance this important work.*

Sincerely,



Helen Sanpei, Principal
McKinley Community School for Adults



Michele Fukumoto, Vice Principal
Farrington Campus



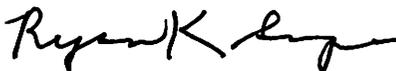
Lance Jyo, Vice Principal
Moanalua and Kauai Campus



Kurt Ginoza, Vice Principal
Maui Campus (Molokai & Lanai)



Mark Nakamura, Vice Principal
McKinley Campus



Ryan Sanpei,
MCSA Workforce Program Specialist

SB-2807

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 9:09:30 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/17/2026 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bill Caldwell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose

SB-2807

Submitted on: 2/13/2026 5:23:36 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/17/2026 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Bishop	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Lee, Chair DeCorte, Chair Kim, and members of the Committees,

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong opposition to this bill!

With all due respect, DLNR struggles in great conscience to do its constitutionally assigned duties as it is. Why would the Legislature want to impose the additional duties of a more or less defunct HTA on this struggling bureaucracy that has real critical work to do on behalf of the fragile and endangered natural resources it holds in trust for the people of Hawaii?

Please defer this bill indefinitely.

DLNR HAS MORE THAN ENOUGH TO DO ALREADY.

With Aloha,

Lisa Bishop

Oahu resident, homeowner, tax payer, voter

LATE

SB-2807

Submitted on: 2/16/2026 6:28:30 PM

Testimony for WLA on 2/17/2026 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James McCully	Individual	Comments	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Chairs DeCoite, Kim, and Lee

I offer comments today as a private citizen on SB 2807. However as some of you know I am the Hawaii Island member to the Hawaii Tourism Authority Advisory Board as well as the Chair of the Banyan Drive Hawaii Redevelopment Agency. Our Authority's position is represented today by the testimony submitted by our President & CEO, Caroline Anderson. I am not in conflict with that position. As the Chair of the Administrative Committee tasked with legislative affairs and establishing our boards policies I thought my testimony today could be a model for how our interests as members of an Advisory Board status may be represented.

First, I want to acknowledge that destination management is absolutely critical to Hawai'i's future. Tourism impacts our natural resources, neighborhoods, cultural sites, and infrastructure systems. It must be actively managed by dedicated professionals with an engaged community.

SB 2807 reflects an important policy concern: many visitor impacts occur on lands managed by DLNR.

It is logical to recognize that enforcement, site management, and conservation must be central to destination management.

DLNR's mission is resource protection. It's kuleana is huge; managing state parks, conservation districts, forestry, aquatic resources, and enforcement. Adding full destination management responsibility — including visitor education strategy, demand shaping, analytics, and industry coordination — would significantly expand its mandate and further tax its capacities. And when it comes to Destination Management we always need to take a hard look at Capacity !

HTA's concern about fragmentation is valid. Destination management only works when what we promote aligns with what communities can sustain. Whether it is transferred to DLNR, or a new division within DBEDT or even should it remain with HTA, destination management requires:

1. sustained funding (beyond a one-year appropriation)
2. dedicated staffing with analytics capacity
3. formal coordination authority across agencies
4. clear performance metrics
5. structural integration with tourism marketing

I urge the Committee to ensure that whichever structure is adopted, it is adequately resourced, integrated, and operationally realistic. I'll point out that items 2,4, and 5 above are already in place at HTA.

I'll now put a significant emphasis on number 3 above. Short of the breaking of the various agency "silos" destination management will always remain difficult. Perhaps the cabinet level tourism liaison envisioned in other bills this session could achieve this outcome? Certainly it will be difficult for any one department or authority to achieve the untying of this cross agency Gordian Knot.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide comments and I look forward to working with the Legislature as you strive to resolve the needs of the Tourism industry with, and as well, as the community it resides in.

Jim McCully

Hilo

LATE

SB-2807

Submitted on: 2/17/2026 9:56:35 AM

Testimony for WLA on 2/17/2026 1:05:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gregory Misakian	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB2807.

Gregory Misakian