



The Senate

STATE CAPITOL
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

November 10, 2020

The Honorable David Y. Ige
Governor, State of Hawaii
Executive Chambers
State Capitol
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Governor Ige:

RE: Reopening the State Responsibly

The Senate Special Committee on COVID-19 wishes to convey its continued concerns with the procedures established to reopen the state to tourism during the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. Had it not been for the insistence of the County Mayors that they be given the authority to institute additional traveler testing programs, we may not have identified the growing number of travelers that, while passing initial pre-testing requirements, have since tested positive shortly after arriving in the state.

It is the desire of this Committee that the procedures of our state be amended to be more in line with programs across the globe that have successfully managed incoming travelers. Places such as Taiwan have avoided a single community spread case for 200 days by opening up carefully and instituting shortened quarantines for low to medium risk areas, and only after a second test. According to a report from the Wall Street Journal, non-health-related governmental officials and travel industry stakeholders have continued to push for international corridor pre-testing programs that closely resemble what we have instituted at the state level. At the same time, The CDC maintains that these programs should still require that arriving passengers quarantine for five to seven days and take a second test at that time. In that same report, Dr. Martin Certron, Director of the CDC's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine, openly stated that "this would give a 90% assurance that arriving passengers are COVID free and won't further spread the coronavirus at their destinations."

While we certainly understand the importance of reopening our tourism industry, we believe that it must be done in a way that provides confidence to our citizens that their health and safety come first. Additionally, if done correctly, the state has the opportunity to give confidence to our visitors. While they may need to subject themselves to additional procedures, that they would, in return, better assure they can travel safely within the state, thus setting us apart from other locations throughout the world.

State Senate, State Capitol
415 S. Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Finally, we ask that you be conscious of the situation in places like Alaska, where high levels of infections have reached even the most remote regions of the state. We had already seen massive upticks in our state's infection rates when the proper precautions were not taken, and we only wish to avoid another setback in our state's road to recovery. We ask that you work closely with the Department of Health in the crafting of these procedures moving forward and that they align with the state's testing capacity, and overall testing strategy, as outlined in the Department of Health's October 15, 2020, letter to this Committee. Our health officials should be the predominant voices in how these programs are constructed in the future.

The Committee requests that you provide a response by **4:00 pm, Friday, November 13, 2020**. Please email your response to all Senate Special Committee COVID-19 members. Should you have any questions, please contact Duncan Osorio at 586-6800 or via email at d.osorio@capitol.hawaii.gov

Sincerely,

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Senator Jarrett Keohokalole
Senator Michelle N. Kidani
Senator Donna Mercado Kim
Senator Sharon Moriwaki
Senator Kurt Fevella

Attachments:



2020-10-15
RESPONSE from DOI

Cc: Senate President
Department of Health