



TOURISM LIAISON

LEAD TESTIMONY

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TOURISM LIAISON

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Statement of
MARSHA WIENERT
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Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, CULTURE & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
Monday, February 2, 2009
8:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

in consideration of
HB 960
RELATING TO THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY.

Chair Manahan, Vice Chair Tokioka and Members of the House Committee on Tourism, Culture and International Affairs.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism supports the intent of HB 960, but has some concerns, which we would like to comment on.

HB 960 broadens the definition of a tourism emergency to mean *an event or condition that adversely affects Hawai'i's tourism industry by resulting in a substantial interruption of commerce in the State and adversely affects the welfare of the people of Hawai'i*, and we concur with this broadened definition.

HB 960 also deletes the need for the tourism board to request the governor to declare that a tourism emergency exists in order for the board to develop and implement programs to respond to the emergency.

Our concern is not with the broadened tourism emergency definition; however, we do have concerns with HB 960 because it specifies that the authority shall develop plans and

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programs to respond to tourism emergencies within five (5) categories. In our opinion, these five categories are much broader than what the tourism emergency trust fund was originally intended for and include actions that are beyond the authority's responsibilities. Furthermore, we feel that the five categories are not needed, as the broadened definition of a tourism emergency included within this measure covers all initiatives that may be required to ensure tourism's continuity and the safety of our visitors.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on HB 960.

LATE TESTIMONY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
25th LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION of 2009

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, CULTURE & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
Representative Joey Manahan, Chair

2/02/09
8:30 AM – Room 312

HB 960
Relating to Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA)

Chair Manahan and members of this Committee, my name is Max Sword, here on behalf of Outrigger Hotels, to support this bill.

This bill proposes to clarify the definition of what a tourism emergency is, by including “economic disaster” in that definition.

This change would allow the HTA to access those funds now, because we are in an economic disaster.

We urge that you pass out this bill and mahalo for allowing me to testify.

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