SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY TO DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN BASED ON TOURISM HOT SPOTS IDENTIFIED IN COUNTY DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANS.

WHEREAS, tourism is a major contributor to Hawaii's economy, with visitors to Hawaii spending more than $17,000,000,000 in 2018, and generating more than $2,000,000,000 in state tax revenue and supporting more than two hundred thousand jobs in 2019; and

WHEREAS, the number of visitor arrivals declined from more than 10,000,000 in 2019 to 2,400,000 in 2020 due to the global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, causing disruption to Hawaii's economy and a record 149,900 unemployed in April 2020; and

WHEREAS, the current reduction in the number of visitors provides Hawaii with the opportunity to review and restructure tourism management practices that can be implemented as tourism recovers; and

WHEREAS, the steady increase in visitors prior to March 2020 caused a strain on infrastructure, facilities, and attractions relied upon and enjoyed by residents and tourists alike; and

WHEREAS, between 2010 and 2020, residents who agreed with the statement, "tourism brings more benefits than problems", declined from eighty percent to fifty-four percent; and

WHEREAS, this decline illustrates residents' growing concerns with the impacts that pre-COVID-19 tourism had on Hawaii's natural resources and the residents' respective communities; and
WHEREAS, these concerns led to the formation of grassroots community groups seeking to mitigate the growing impacts of tourism; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Tourism Authority previously collaborated with other agencies and entities to address the impacts of tourism; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Tourism Authority's efforts included collaborating with the Department of Land and Natural Resources to develop the Haena State Park management plan, funding "ambassadors" to manage traffic at Maunawili Falls, and working with the City and County of Honolulu to fund the installation of closed-circuit cameras in Waikiki; and

WHEREAS, the goal for the Hawaii Tourism Authority's destination management action plan for each island is to "rebuild, redefine, and reset" the direction of tourism to enhance residents' quality of life and improve the visitor experience across the islands; and

WHEREAS, destination management planning includes attracting and educating responsible visitors, and finding solutions to overcrowded attractions and natural resources, overtaxed infrastructure, and other tourism-related problems; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Tourism Authority identifies a "hot spot" as an area or site that attracts visitors because of its popularity, resulting in overcrowding, congestion, degradation of resources, safety hazards, and a negative experience for residents and visitors; and

WHEREAS, destination management planning involves collaboration with the federal, state, and county governments; visitor industry; and impacted communities to improve Hawaii's world-class natural resources and unique cultural assets; and

WHEREAS, the global COVID-19 pandemic has raised awareness of visitor-industry vulnerabilities and opportunities to build back better; and
WHEREAS, any state or county agency may render services upon the request of the Hawaii Tourism Authority; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Tourism Authority may establish an advisory group, which may meet monthly or as the Hawaii Tourism Authority deems necessary, to prepare and execute programs for the management, improvement, and protection of Hawaii's natural environment and other areas frequented by visitors; and

WHEREAS, the advisory group may include the Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism and the Chairperson of the Board of Land and Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Tourism Authority is responsible for creating a vision and a long-range strategic plan for tourism in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Tourism Authority adopted a new five-year strategic plan in 2020 that "shifts more emphasis to address tourism's impacts"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, that the Hawaii Tourism Authority is requested to develop an implementation plan based on tourism hot spots identified in county destination management action plans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the implementation plan:

(1) Compile and prioritize issues and hot spots identified in each island's Destination Management Action Plan;

(2) Determine the resources, including staffing, needed to facilitate multi-year discussions between public, private, and community stakeholders to address issues and hot spots, including discussions with each respective county and state agency on who would do the work and the suitable entity to retain contractors and staff;

(3) Establish personnel descriptions or consultant scopes of work that could be used as templates to carry out the work;
(4) Clarify and describe the process involved in the Hawaii Tourism Authority's role to secure and distribute resources, monitor progress at the island level, and measure outcomes;

(5) Develop a recommended timetable for implementation; and

(6) Explore potential areas for increasing revenue, including reviewing impact fees; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Hawaii Tourism Authority is requested to submit the implementation plan, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2022; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; and President and Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Tourism Authority.