



Ke'ena Kuleana Ho'okipa O Hawai'i
Hawai'i Convention Center
1801 Kalākaua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815
kelepona tel 808 973 2255
kelepa'i fax 808 973 2253
kahua pa'a web hawaii tourism authority.org

Josh Green, M.D.
Governor

John De Fries
President and Chief Executive Officer

Statement of
JOHN DE FRIES
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
COMMITTEE ON TOURISM

February 2, 2023
10:00 a.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 423 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL NO. 1237
RELATING TO A GREEN USER FEE PROGRAM

Aloha Chair Quinlan, Vice Chair Hussey-Burdick, and members of the Committee on Tourism,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments in support of the intent of HB1237, to collect user fees to support the maintenance of our state parks.

The ethic of mālama – care and stewardship – is the core of our visitor education efforts. HTA's work is framed by four interacting strategic pillars: Natural Resources, Hawaiian Culture, Community, and Branding – the last of which is dependent upon the strength of the first three. Hawai'i's environment is a treasure, and it is our collective kuleana to protect it for the generations to come. Fulfilling that responsibility takes funding. We agree with the intent of this legislation as it is in alignment with our Strategic Plan priorities in the Natural Resources pillar, as well as action items in our community-generated Destination Management Action Plans.

We have consistently been supportive of site-specific user fees as our preferred model to facilitate visitor contributions to the care of our natural resources. As we maintain GoHawaii.com and the GoHawaii app as visitor interfaces, we stand ready to collaborate with the Department of Land and Natural Resources on this effort.

We also recommend additions to this bill: as one of the two official languages of the State of Hawai'i and the native language of this land, 'Ōlelo Hawai'i should be included in the list of languages to be available on the platform. Additionally, to support more international visitors, we recommend adding French, German and Spanish languages.

We support the intent of HB1237, we stand ready to assist in educating visitor industry stakeholders and visitors, and we defer to our colleagues at the Department of Land and Natural Resources on matters related to the implementation of this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide these comments.