



Ke'ena Kuleana Ho'okipa O Hawai'i
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Statement of
JOHN DE FRIES
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
**COMMITTEES ON TRANSPORTATION AND CULTURE AND THE ARTS
AND
ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

Tuesday, February 14, 2023
1:01 p.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL NO. 449
RELATING TO THE FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS

Aloha Chairs Lee and DeCoite, Vice Chairs Inouye and Wakai, and Members of the Committees on Transportation and Culture and the Arts and Energy, Economic Development and Tourism,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of the intent of SB449, to appropriate funds to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for the Thirteenth Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture to be held in Honolulu from June 6 to 16, 2024.

It is an honor for Hawai'i to be selected as the host of this event, the world's largest gathering of indigenous Pacific Islanders which only occurs every four years. Though Hawai'i delegations have participated in the festival since the 1970s, this will be the festival's first time in Hawai'i. In the Hawaiian cultural tradition of ho'okipa, there is a reciprocity associated with the hospitality extended by our fellow Pacific Islanders at festivals hosted in the decades past, so it is important for us to extend the same hospitality to them.

For Hawai'i to host the festival is a monumental opportunity to amplify HTA's four interacting strategic pillars: Natural Resources, Hawaiian Culture, Community, and Branding. With appropriate funding to support the festival, Hawai'i will be able to showcase ourselves as a capable host of high-level international gatherings.

We support SB449 and stand ready to assist in planning and support the Festival of Pacific Arts & Culture as it relates to the implementation of this measure. We further commend the diligent work of the Commission, led by our own Chief Brand Officer Kalani Ka'anā'anā, that brought us to this point.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.