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

Wednesday, March 29, 2023  
2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**SENATE BILL NO. 449 SD2 HD1**  
**RELATING TO THE FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS**

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Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee on Finance,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of SB449 SD2 HD1, 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 SD2 HD1 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.