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Statement of
MARSHA WIENERT
Tourism Liaison
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM & CULTURE
Monday, January 28, 2008
10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 325

in consideration of
HB 2986
MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

Chair Yamane and Members of the House Committee on Tourism & Culture.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism has concerns with HB 2986, which designates a portion of the tourism special fund to cultural sensitivity training programs for hospitality industry workers who come into contact with Chinese, Korean and Japanese visitors.

The intent of HB2986 has merit due to the tourism opportunities from South Korea and the People's Republic of China. However, the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) already has a workforce development initiative in place and funding for these types of training programs should be a part of this initiative and its existing budget.

Additionally, private institutions such as the Academia Language School have already developed programs to assist our hospitality industry with language and cultural training classes that address the Korean and Chinese markets.

Finally, any diversion of funds from marketing programs and other initiatives developed and approved by the HTA and its Board of Directors could have an impact on our state's tourism marketing efforts. Because of the uncertainties we face and the expected softening of our economy and the tourism industry, now is not the time to decrease funding for marketing initiatives, as every effort should be made to support and enhance these programs, which will benefit the overall economy.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on HB 2986.

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



HB 2986 - MAKING AN APPROPRIATION FOR THE
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Tourism & Culture

January 28, 2008 at 10:00 am

by

John Morton
Vice President for Community Colleges
University of Hawai'i System

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HB 2986 - Making an Appropriation for the Community Colleges

Chair Yamane, Vice Chair Manahan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2986. The University of Hawai'i Community Colleges recognize that the tourism market is changing and that if Hawai'i is to capitalize on the increase in visitors from China and Korea that we need to be sure that our hospitality workers better understand the language and culture of these visitors.

Last year the Legislature provided \$250,000 to the community colleges for a rapid response fund to allow us to move quickly when a training need emerges. I have already authorized the expenditure of some of that money to begin the process of designing the language and culture training described in this bill and staff from Maui CC, Kapi'olani CC, and Hawai'i CC have begun to work on the program.

It is a little early to know whether additional funds from HTA would be necessary to meet the need. Perhaps this bill may be kept alive should additional funds be needed and we will certainly keep you informed of our progress with this program.



Hawaii Tourism Authority

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Testimony of
Rex Johnson
President and Chief Executive Officer
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
on
H.B. 2986
Making an Appropriation for the Community Colleges

House Committee on Tourism & Culture
Monday, January 28, 2008
10:00 a.m.
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The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) supports the intent of H.B. 2986, which establishes a pilot program for a cultural sensitivity training program for hospitality industry workers that come into contact with Chinese, Korean, and Japanese visitors.

The goal of the Workforce Development Initiative in the *Hawai'i Tourism Strategic Plan: 2005 – 2015 (State TSP)*, is "to ensure a sufficient and highly qualified workforce that is provided with meaningful careers and advancement opportunities." To advance this initiative, the HTA contracted with the University of Hawai'i's School of Travel Industry Management to develop a *Tourism Workforce Development Strategic Plan: 2007-2015 (WDP)*, which was completed in November 2007. The Plan was developed for the planning and coordination of employment, training and human resources services for Hawai'i's visitor industry. It includes operational strategies that include lead and supporting organizations, recommended timelines, and measures to assess the effectiveness of the Plan.

HTA is currently identifying those actions which are appropriate and possible within the mission and resources of the HTA. For FY 2008, the HTA has budgeted \$700,000 to address Workforce Development Programs. Among the actions in the Plan is the implementation of cultural sensitivity training for hospitality industry workers who come into contact with Chinese, Korean and Japanese visitors.

The HTA is planning to issue a public request for proposals during fiscal year 2008 to support the development of those training programs. As such, the HTA does not feel that H.B. 2986 is needed at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



HAWAI'I HOTEL & LODGING

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TESTIMONY OF MURRAY TOWILL
PRESIDENT
HAWAI'I HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION

January 28, 2008

HB 2986: Making an Appropriation for the Community College

Good morning Chairman Yamane and members of the House Committee on Tourism & Culture. I am Murray Towill, President of the Hawai'i Hotel & Lodging Association.

The Hawai'i Hotel & Lodging Association is a statewide association of hotels, condominiums, timeshare companies, management firms, suppliers, and other related firms and individuals. Our membership includes over 170 hotels representing over 47,300 rooms. Our hotel members range from the 2,523 rooms of the Hilton Hawaiian Village to the 4 rooms of the Bougainvillea Bed & Breakfast on the Big Island.

The Hawai'i Hotel & Lodging Association does not support HB 2986: Making an Appropriation for the Community College. While this is a worthwhile project, we do not support funds for this type of project being earmarked by the legislature from the Tourism Special Fund.

The advocates of projects like this should approach the Hawaii Tourism Authority ("HTA") directly for funding. HTA can then evaluate how the proposal compares to other proposals aimed at Workforce Development and/or Hawaiian Culture. Workforce development and Hawaiian Culture are two of the nine areas identified for emphasis in the State's Tourism Strategic Plan.

Mahalo again for this opportunity to testify.