

SB 271 – Relating to Tourism Emergency

**Adds a national or global economic crisis to situations considered a tourism emergency.
Requires, in addition to the governor's declaration of the existence of a tourism emergency,
the governor's express approval and direction before action may be taken.**



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GOVERNOR
MARSHA WIENERT
TOURISM LIAISON

TOURISM LIAISON

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Statement of
MARSHA WIENERT
Tourism Liaison
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM
Tuesday, February 3, 2009
2:45 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

in consideration of
SB 271
RELATING TO TOURISM EMERGENCY.

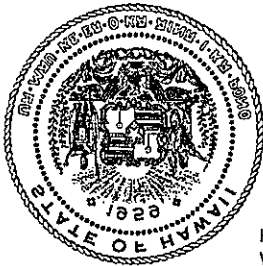
Chair Nishihara, Vice Chair Galuteria and Members of the Senate Committee on Tourism.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism supports SB 271, which would amend Section 201B-9 (a), Hawaii Revised Statutes, by adding a “national or global economic crisis” to situations considered when declaring a tourism emergency.

We strongly believe that the current world economic crisis has had the same effect that a world conflict, terrorist threat, natural disaster or outbreak of disease would have on Hawai‘i’s tourism industry and the state’s economy. Therefore, allowing access to the tourism emergency fund for this reason is justifiable.

Once the tourism board asks the governor to declare a tourism emergency, the authority shall develop and implement measures to respond to the emergency. While we appreciate the specification of this bill that no action may be taken by the authority *without the governor’s express approval* as it relates to a national or global economic crisis, we humbly request further clarification on the intent of this language.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on SB 271.



LINDA LINGLE
Governor

LLOYD I. UNEBASAMI
Interim President and
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Testimony of
Lloyd Unebasami
Interim President and Chief Executive Officer
Hawai'i Tourism Authority

on
S.B. 271
Relating to Tourism Emergency

Senate Committee on Tourism
Tuesday, February 3, 2009
2:45 p.m.
Conference Room 229

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) supports S.B. 271, which adds a national and/or global economic crisis to situations considered a tourism emergency.

The current law identifies a world conflict, terrorist threat, natural disaster, outbreak of disease, or other catastrophic events as a tourism emergency but is not clear that the Tourism Emergency Trust Fund could be used to respond to a national or global economic crisis such as the one we are in currently. The economic crisis is resulting in a substantial interruption of commerce and adversely affecting the welfare of the people of Hawai'i, but is not caused by the events described in the current law.

We support S.B. 271 as well as S.B. 276, which is being proposed by HTA.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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**TESTIMONY OF MURRAY TOWILL
PRESIDENT
HAWAI'I HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION
February 3, 2009
RE: SB 271 Relating to Tourism Emergency**

Good afternoon Chairman Nishihara and members of the Senate Committee on Tourism. 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 supports SB 271 Relating to Tourism Emergency. This bill would clarify that the Tourism Emergency Trust Fund could be utilized for an economic disaster as well as a natural or terrorist created disaster as indicated in the current statute. Our experiences over the last year clearly indicate the value of this step.

The US and Hawaii are currently facing the most severe economic times since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Unfortunately, the current law does not appear to allow the HTA to access the \$5 million in this Fund. Some of the funds could greatly aid Hawaii's effort to attract visitors and keep our people working.

Mahalo again for this opportunity to testify.

THE SENATE
25th LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION of 2009

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM
Senator Clarence Nishihara, Chair

2/3/09
2:45 PM

SB 271
Relating to Tourism Emergency

Chair Nishihara and members of this Committee, my name is Max Sword, here on behalf of Outrigger Hotels, to support this bill.

This bill proposes to clarify the definition of what a tourism emergency is, by including "economic disaster" in that definition.

This change would allow the HTA to access those funds now, because we are in an economic disaster.

We urge that you pass out this bill and mahalo for allowing me to testify.