

Shannon Wood
PO Box 1013
Kailua, HI 96735
Cell Phone: 808/224-4496; E-mail: swood@hoku.com

LEGISLATIVE

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM
Sen. Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Sen. Brickwood Galuteria, Vice Chair

HB 1763 HD2 - RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY
OPPOSE

PUBLIC HEARING

2:45 pm

Thursday, March 19, 2009

Conference Room 229

My name is Shannon Wood, a resident of Kailua, O`ahu, speaking on my own behalf in **OPPOSITION** to **HB 1763 HD2 - RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY.**

I have three concerns: The first deals with the timing as we face critical economic times world-wide. We need to focus on them, not setting up a new cabinet-level department.

The second has to do with establishing still another state department with little or no public participation in critical policy-making decisions.

Back in 1991, using our experiences as semi-serious astronomers, my husband and I opened a small business called **A GUIDED TOUR OF THE GALAXY** which provided incredible night-sky explorations all across the state. **A GUIDED TOUR** received no support from the *Department of Business & Economic Development* during the first eight years of operation - despite making several requests for help.

I remember being told by staffers that *DBEDT's* first function was to provide research and support to the *Legislature* and then to the larger tourism businesses. Small businesses such as ours as well as startups could always get help from the Small Business Administration.

However, once the *Hawai'i Tourism Authority* started up, within two years we'd received a small grant as well as significant marketing support. The staff & boardmembers understand what it's like to run a business.

Unfortunately, losing dark skies here on O`ahu to development combined with the high costs in taking people to the Neighbor Islands made continuing operations financially unsound. Reluctantly, we closed down our little visitor industry business at the end of 2005.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in opposition **HB 1763 HD2 - RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY.**