

LATE TESTIMONY

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
25<sup>th</sup> LEGISLATURE  
REGULAR SESSION of 2009

COMMITTEE ON OTURISM, CULTURE & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
Representative Joey Manahan, Chair

3/16/09  
8:30 AM

SB 1227, SD 2  
Relating to Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA)

Chair Manahan and members of this Committee, my name is Max Sword, here on behalf of Outrigger Hotels, to speak in opposition to this bill.

In the past the tourism-marketing was under the direction of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT). Because DBEDT was a government agency and had to work under a process that is required of a State department, it was very cumbersome. That arrangement did not allow for one of the important pillars in worldwide marketing, flexibility to adjust to change.

This bill would create a similar situation with a Department of Tourism and return tourism marketing back to the "dark ages" of inflexible marketing efforts, which why the HTA was formed in the first place. This is a step backwards, not forward.

We urge that you hold this bill.

Mahalo for allowing me to testify.

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Maui Hotel & Lodging  
ASSOCIATION

LATE TESTIMONY

Testimony of  
**Carol Reimann**  
Executive Director  
Maui Hotel & Lodging Association  
on  
**SB1227**  
**Relating to the Hawaii Tourism Authority**

COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, CULTURE, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Monday, March 16, 2009 – 8:30am  
Conference Room 312

The Maui Hotel & Lodging Association (MHLA) is the legislative arm of Maui's Visitor Industry. Our membership includes approximately 120 property and allied business members – all of whom have an interest in the visitor industry.

MHLA opposes SB1227 entitled Relating to the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA). Since its inception in 1998 upon the recommendation of the Economic Revitalization Task Force, the HTA has been responsible for all aspects of tourism. From policy setting to marketing and product development, HTA has been instrumental in managing our visitor industry.

Hawaii's visitor industry is the economic driver for the State. Additionally, our entire economy continues to struggle during these tough economic times. Abolishing the HTA at this time would have a negative effect on many of our current marketing, product development & sports initiatives; and would exacerbate an already vulnerable economy.

We humbly ask for your opposition of SB1227.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

Sincerely,

Carol Reimann  
Executive Director

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STATE TESTIMONY

**COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, CULTURE & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

*Rep. Joey Manahan, Chair*  
*Rep. James Kunane Tokioka, Vice Chair*

**SB1227 SD2- RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY**  
**OPPOSE**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**8:30 am**

**Monday, March 17, 2009**

**Conference Room 312**

My name is Shannon Wood, a resident of Kailua, O`ahu, speaking on my own behalf in **OPPOSITION to SB 1227 SD2 - 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 **DBEDT** during the first eight years of operation - despite making several requests for help.

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 at the end of 2005.

Another matter which concerns me is the proliferation of bills creating task forces & working groups on all kinds of subjects in addition to ones setting up new administrative agencies & departments. At least a dozen are still alive & all have a \$\$\$ cost attached.

Why not initiate some sort comprehensive examination of how our state government is set up - unfortunately, calling a Constitutional Convention was rejected by the voters last fall.

Still, the *Legislature* itself can set up its own task force/working group in conjunction with the *Legislative Auditor's* office to come up with recommendations for new agencies and departments by the 2010 Session.

*Mahalo* for the opportunity to testify in opposition to **SB 1227 SD2 - RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY.**