

**SB 271**



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Conference Room 211, State Capitol  
Friday, February 27, 2009; 9:00 a.m.

**RE: SENATE BILL NO. 271 SD1, RELATING TO TOURISM EMERGENCY**

Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii and its Tourism Committee support SB 271 SD1, relating to Tourism Emergency.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,100 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. The organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

This measure adds a national or global economic crisis to situations considered a tourism emergency and 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.

The Chamber, through its Tourism Committee, encourages a broad base of understanding, support and appreciation for the Tourism and Travel Industries within the business community, Legislature and the general public. The committee also supports visitor industry growth and improvement while working to enhance the visitor experience.

The Chamber understands the value and significance of the tourism industry to Hawaii's economy. Any decline in this sector harms all businesses, including small businesses that solely rely on tourism.

As a result, the Chamber believes it is critical to respond to emergency situations on a timely basis to offset the impact on the industry. This bill will provide a mechanism to address emergency situations, thus mitigating potential negative outcomes.

The Chamber of Commerce and its Tourism Committee, therefore, support SB 271, SD1 and urges the committee's support of this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments.



**HAWAII HOTEL & LODGING  
ASSOCIATION**

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Honolulu, HI 96815  
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Website: [www.hawaii-hotels.org](http://www.hawaii-hotels.org)



31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary  
Are You Walking???  
May 16, 2009  
(Always the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May)  
[www.charitywalkhawaii.org](http://www.charitywalkhawaii.org)

**TESTIMONY OF MURRAY TOWILL  
PRESIDENT  
HAWAII HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION  
February 27, 2009  
RE: SB 271 SD1 Relating to Tourism Emergency**

Good morning Chair Kim and members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means. I am Murray Towill, President of the Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association.

The Hawaii 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 Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association supports SB 271 SD1 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 right now.

Mahalo again for this opportunity to testify.



David L. Lewin  
General Manager

Hyatt Regency Waikiki Resort & Spa  
2424 Kalakaua Avenue  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815 USA

Telephone: 808.237.6100  
FAX: 808.237.6114  
Email: dlewin@hyatt.com  
waikiki.hyatt.com

**TESTIMONY OF DAVID LEWIN  
GENERAL MANAGER  
HYATT REGENY WAIKIKI BEACH RESORT & SPA**

**February 27, 2009**

**9:00AM**

**STATE CAPITOL CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

**RE: SB 271 SD1 Relating to Tourism Emergency**

Aloha Chair Kim and members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means. I am David Lewin, General Manager of the Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa.

The Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa consists of 1,229 rooms and approximately 700 staff and management.

The Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa supports SB 271 SD1 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.

The current law does not appear to allow the HTA to access the \$5 million in this Fund. Use of these funds will aid in attracting visitors to Hawaii and the tourism sector, but more importantly will help to keep our valuable staff employed!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Travel should take you places®

**TESTIMONY OF JERRY GIBSON  
AREA VICE PRESIDENT, HILTON HAWAII  
February 27, 2009  
RE: SB 271 SD1 Relating to Tourism Emergency**

Aloha, Chair Kim and Senate Committee on Ways and Means. Thank you for holding this hearing and allowing the members of the visitor industry to submit testimony to you.

Our Hilton Hawaii portfolio spans four islands: Oahu, Maui, Kauai and the Big Island and represents more than 7,000 hotel guest rooms and timeshare units. Our Hilton Hawaiian Village is the largest hotel in Hawaii with 3,543 hotel and timeshare units.

Hilton Hawaii strongly supports SB 271 SD1 relating to tourism emergency. This bill would clarify that the Tourism Emergency Trust Fund could be used to respond to a national or global economic crisis, as well as natural or terrorist-created disaster as indicated in the current statute.

While the current economic situation is not a natural or terrorist-created disaster, it still represents a disaster to our state's economy and the people of Hawaii. Nearly every member of the state's population is being affected. Everyday, we read about declining visitor counts, layoffs, and business closures.

Additional marketing funds such as the Tourism Emergency Trust Fund are critical in bringing back and maintaining the health of our state's largest industry.

We urge the committee to support this.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 271 SD1.

Mahalo,

  
Jerry Gibson  
Area Vice President, Hilton Hawaii



February 27, 2009

Hawaii State Capitol  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**TESTIMONY OF EDGAR GUM  
GENERAL MANAGER  
MARRIOTT'S KO OLINA BEACH CLUB**

**RE: SB 271 SD1 Relating to Tourism Emergency**

Chairman Kim and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Edgar Gum, General Manager of Marriott's Ko Olina Beach Club. Our resort is one of ten Marriott properties in the State of Hawaii that employs over 5,000 associates.

Marriott's Ko Olina Beach Club strongly supports SB 271 SD1 Relating to Tourism Emergency. We support this bill as it would broaden the scope of a "tourism emergency" to include regional and worldwide economic crises that impact Hawaii's largest industry – tourism.

Such an emergency would allow the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) access to the \$5 million in the Tourism emergency Trust Fund. With the recent decline in tourism, it is imperative for the HTA to continue to promote Hawaii as a travel destination and if necessary, this bill would allow for these much needed funds.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means

HEARING      Friday, February 27, 2009  
                  9:00 am  
                  Conference Room 211  
                  State Capitol, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**RE:    SB 271, SD1, Relating to Tourism Emergency**

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and Members of the Committee:

Retail Merchants of Hawaii (RMH) is a not-for-profit trade organization representing 200 members and over 2,000 storefronts, and is committed to support the retail industry and business in general in Hawaii.

**RMH supports SB271, SD1**, which adds a national or global economic crisis to situations considered a tourism emergency.

While the existing statute defines a number of occurrences and disasters as tourism emergencies, there is no specific reference to the current economic crisis in which we find our state, as well as our nation.

Our tourism retailers are experiencing double-digit decreases in sales. Most that had expansion plans in the works have canceled them; some have just shut their doors. Layoffs and declines in job growth are an unfortunate consequence.

We respectfully request your support for SB271, SD1. Thank you for your consideration and for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Carol Pregill'.

Carol Pregill, President

RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII  
1240 Ala Moana Boulevard, Suite 215  
Honolulu, HI 96814  
ph: 808-592-4200 / fax: 808-592-4202

## **kim2 - Arline**

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**From:** Bob Taylor [Bob@mauidivers.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 26, 2009 1:49 PM  
**To:** WAM Testimony  
**Subject:** Hearing - Friday, February 27, 2009 at 9:00 am - WAM

Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Senator Shan Tsutsui, Vice Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means

HEARING: Friday, February 27, 2009  
9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 211  
State Capitol, Honolulu, Hawaii - 96813

RE: SB 271, SD1, Relating to Tourism Emergency

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and Members of the Committee:

Our company has over 500 employees and has been in business in Hawaii for over 50 years. Over 90% of our business is dependent on the number of visitors coming to Hawaii. This is definitely the worse economic crisis that we have ever faced.

**Maui Divers of Hawaii, Ltd. supports SB271, SD1, which adds a national or global economic crisis to situations considered a tourism emergency.**

Sincerely,  
Robert M. Taylor

Bob Taylor  
President & CEO  
Maui Divers of Hawaii, Ltd.  
1520 Liona Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii - 96814  
Phone: (808) 943-8304  
Fax: (808) 946-8460  
Cell: (808) 348-2543



*February 25,2009*

*Testimony of Stephanie N. Iona  
General Manager  
Waimea Plantation Cottages  
Waimea, Hawaii  
February 27,2009*

*RE: SB 271 SD1 RELATING TO TOURISM EMERGENCY*

*Aloha Chair Kim and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,*

*I am Stephanie Iona, General Manager of the Waimea Plantation Cottages located on the beautiful Garden Island of Kaua'i.*

*Our resort has won many national and international awards for its historical significance in our industry, employs 50 plus Team Members, and is the "only full service Resort" on the West side of our island. Our guests include suppliers/vendors as well as military personnel working at Pacific Missile Range, our business partners on Kaua'i such as Syngenta Seeds, BASF, Pioneer Seed, Kaua'i Veterans Memorial Hospital, and needless to say, a strong return guest clientele.*

*Waimea Plantation Cottages supports SB271 SD1 Relating to the Tourism Emergency. It is evident that our Nation, and the world, is suffering from a severe economic downturn, resulting in a tourism loss in Hawaii none like I have ever experienced in my 30 plus years working in this industry.*

*The current law does not appear to allow the HTA to access the \$5 million currently in this Fund, and needless to say, this will be a necessary source of revenue to "jumpstart" our marketing efforts to attract visitors and keep our residents employed.*

*Mahalo for your kind consideration to share my testimony this day.*



February 27, 2009

Hawaii State Capitol  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**TESTIMONY OF EDGAR GUM  
GENERAL MANAGER  
MARRIOTT'S KO OLINA BEACH CLUB**

**RE: SB 271 SD1 Relating to Tourism Emergency**

Chairman Kim and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Edgar Gum, General Manager of Marriott's Ko Olina Beach Club. Our resort is one of ten Marriott properties in the State of Hawaii that employs over 5,000 associates.

Marriott's Ko Olina Beach Club strongly supports SB 271 SD1 Relating to Tourism Emergency. We support this bill as it would broaden the scope of a "tourism emergency" to include regional and worldwide economic crises that impact Hawaii's largest industry – tourism.

Such an emergency would allow the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) access to the \$5 million in the Tourism emergency Trust Fund. With the recent decline in tourism, it is imperative for the HTA to continue to promote Hawaii as a travel destination and if necessary, this bill would allow for these much needed funds.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



*Maui Hotel & Lodging*  
ASSOCIATION

February 26, 2009

The Honorable Donna Mercado Kim, Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means  
The Senate  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

RE: Testimony for SB271 - Friday, February 27, 2009

Dear Chairman Mercado Kim & Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

I represent the Maui Hotel & Lodging Association (MHLA) – our membership includes approximately 120 property and allied business members – all of whom have an interest in the visitor industry. Collectively, the visitor industry employs nearly 40% of Maui county residents.

MHLA supports SB271 entitled Relating to Tourism Emergency. We believe that accessing the Tourism Emergency Fund during an economic crisis is an appropriate use of the fund; and that the funds would be put to good use to help us during these tough economic times.

There is no doubt that the visitor industry has taken a hard hit since the airline crisis early last year and the subsequent economic downfall felt across the nation. As the driving economic engine for Hawaii, the decline of tourism has negatively affected many other industries, lives, businesses and jobs. Accessing these funds is critical to assist us in our recovery process and will be of benefit to many residents in Hawaii.

We ask for your support of SB271.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carol Reimann  
Executive Director

**kim2 - Arline**

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 26, 2009 9:16 AM  
**To:** WAM Testimony  
**Cc:** chris\_resich@mcahawaii.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB271 on 2/27/2009 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for WAM 2/27/2009 9:00:00 AM SB271

Conference room: 211  
Testifier position:  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Chris Resich  
Organization: Individual  
Address: 615 Piikoi St., Suite 1000 Hnl., Hi., 96814  
Phone: 589-5516  
E-mail: [chris\\_resich@mcahawaii.com](mailto:chris_resich@mcahawaii.com)  
Submitted on: 2/26/2009

**Comments:**

Aloha Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee,

I represent MC&A, Inc., Hawaii's largest travel destination and event management company. We employ 175 associates and operate on all Islands.

I am writing in support of SB271,SD1. Given our current economic environment, I believe the HTA should have access to Tourism Emergency Fund in case of a global economic crisis. The visitor industry and the entire state need aggressive support from the government to ensure our State is competitive in the global tourist market.

Aloha,

Chris Resich  
President & CEO  
MC&A, Inc.  
615 Piikoi St., Suite 1000  
Hnl., HI., 96814  
808-589-5516

MC&A is a proud partner of Global Events Partners The Quality Leader in Destination Management - A Decade in Leading the DMC Industry <http://www.globaleventspartners.com>

## kim4 - Elizabeth

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**From:** mailinglist@capitol.hawaii.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 25, 2009 5:30 PM  
**To:** WAM Testimony  
**Cc:** rodney.ito@marriott.com  
**Subject:** Testimony for SB271 on 2/27/2009 9:00:00 AM

Testimony for WAM 2/27/2009 9:00:00 AM SB271

Conference room: 211  
Testifier position: support  
Testifier will be present: No  
Submitted by: Rodney Ito  
Organization: Waikoloa Beach Marriott  
Address: 69-275 Waikoloa Beach Drive Waikoloa, Hawaii  
Phone: 808-886-6789  
E-mail: [rodney.ito@marriott.com](mailto:rodney.ito@marriott.com)  
Submitted on: 2/25/2009

**Comments:**

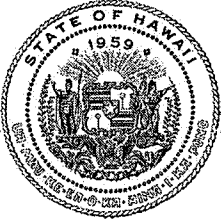
Aloha Chair Kim and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. I am Rodney Ito, General Manager of the Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa.

The downturn in tourism has negatively impacted the people of the Big Island. Many of our businesses are struggling to stay open and our focus is to keep people employed. We need your help!

Although we are in the midst of very difficult economic times people are still traveling. Other resort destinations are pouring millions of dollars into marketing campaigns. We need to do everything we can to maintain a presence in the market and ensure that the traveling public is aware that we are still open for business. I ask your help in supporting legislation that will help HVCB in funding their on-going marketing efforts and ensure that our BIVB gets their fair share.

Please support bill SB 271 in allowing the HTA access to emergency funding to promote tourism. It is critical to our economy to support our tourism industry. Jobs and peoples livelihood will depend on it.

Mahalo!



LINDA LINGLE  
GOVERNOR  
MARSHA WIENERT  
TOURISM LIAISON

## TOURISM LIAISON

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804

Telephone: (808) 586-2362  
Fax: (808) 586-2370

Written statement of  
**MARSHA WIENERT**  
**Tourism Liaison**  
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**  
Friday, February 27, 2009  
9:00 a.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

in consideration of  
**SB 271 SD1**  
**RELATING TO TOURISM EMERGENCY.**

Chair Kim, Vice Chair Tsutsui and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism supports SB 271 SD1, 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 do not believe that this language is needed since the governor, in theory, has already given approval by declaring the emergency.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment on SB 271 SD1.

**Sheraton Princess Kaiulani**

Executive Office  
120 Kaiulani Avenue  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96815

**TESTIMONY OF FRED ORR  
CHAIRMAN ELECT  
HAWAII HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION**

**February 27, 2009**

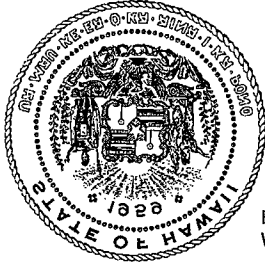
**RE: SB 271 SD1 Relating to Tourism Emergency**

Good morning Chair Kim and members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means. I am Fred Orr, Chairman of the Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association.

The Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association supports SB 271 SD1 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 right now.

Mahalo again for this opportunity to testify.



LINDA LINGLE  
Governor

LLOYD I. UNEBASAMI  
Interim President and  
Chief Executive Officer

# Hawai'i Tourism Authority

Hawai'i Convention Center, 1801 Kalākaua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815  
Website: [www.hawaitourismauthority.org](http://www.hawaitourismauthority.org)

Telephone: (808) 973-2255  
Fax: (808) 973-2253

Testimony of  
**Lloyd Unebasami**  
Interim President and Chief Executive Officer  
Hawai'i Tourism Authority

on  
**S.B. 271, S.D. 1**  
**Relating to Tourism Emergency**

Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Friday, February 27, 2009  
9:00 a.m.  
Conference Room 211

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) supports S.B. 271, S.D. 1 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, S.D. 1 as well as S.B. 276, which is being proposed by HTA.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.





**HAWAII HOTEL & LODGING  
ASSOCIATION**

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Honolulu, HI 96815  
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Website: [www.hawaii-hotels.org](http://www.hawaii-hotels.org)



31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary  
Are You Walking???  
May 16, 2009  
(Always the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May)  
[www.charitywalkhawaii.org](http://www.charitywalkhawaii.org)

**TESTIMONY OF MURRAY TOWILL  
PRESIDENT  
HAWAII HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION  
February 27, 2009  
RE: SB 271 SD1 Relating to Tourism Emergency**

Good morning Chair Kim and members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means. I am Murray Towill, President of the Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association.

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Mahalo again for this opportunity to testify.