



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Higher Education
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By

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**HCR 273/HR 240 – REQUESTING THE SCHOOL OF TRAVEL INDUSTRY
MANAGEMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA TO DEVELOP
ENHANCEMENTS FOR THE TOURISM-RELATED CAPABILITIES OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ECONOMIC RESEARCH ORGANIZATION DATA PORTAL**

Chair Nishimoto, Vice Chair Nakashima and members of the committee, thank you for opportunity to provide joint testimony on HCR 273/HR 240 from the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization (UHERO) and the School of Travel Industry Management (TIM). The UHERO and TIM supports HCR273/HR240 requesting that the TIM School work with UHERO to enhance the capabilities of the UHERO Data Portal to better serve the tourism industry and the broader community.

University of Hawai'i Economic Organization

The mission of UHERO is to inform public- and private-sector decision making through rigorous, independent economic research on the people, environment, and economies of Hawai'i and the Asia-Pacific region. UHERO strives to be a one-stop shop for local data and research. UHERO's unique Data Portal provides access to up to date information on the state's visitor industry, income, employment, and other crucial indicators of Hawai'i's economy.

HCR273/HR240 are consistent with UHERO's mission, and UHERO is willing to work with TIM faculty to add functionality and generally enhance the UHERO Data Portal to better serve the tourism industry and the general public. The UHERO Data Portal is currently funded with support from UHERO's sponsors. To cover the costs of adding features and data to the Data Portal, UHERO/TIM will have to seek additional funding.

Assuming that funding is available, I am certain that we can develop new tools and features for the site that will assist decision makers in the tourism industry as well as the

general public. I should also note that UHERO is actively looking at enhancing the data portal in other ways such as the addition of energy data and more detailed data for communities throughout the state.

School of Travel Industry Management

Hawai'i is fortunate to have the most comprehensive and lengthiest continuous data series on visitor arrivals, visitor satisfaction, and visitor plant inventory in the world, initiated by the Research Department in the former Hawai'i Visitors Bureau (HVB) more than 50 years ago. Hawai'i also boasts having enviable sophisticated data series on visitor expenditures, visitor satisfaction, and the occasional psychographic studies of visitors.

The TIM School has been involved in the development of Hawai'i's visitor data series, since the 1980s when TIM faculty chaired or were members of the Research and Education Committees of the HVB, which shaped the directions of the visitor data and analysis to its current state. TIM faculty have also used the data to conduct early economic impact studies in Hawai'i, as well as collected primary data for original studies on the first resident attitude survey, Delphi forecast study, travel motivations and visitor attractivity studies in Hawai'i.

The TIM School's Center for Tourism Policy Studies was established in 1989 under the auspices of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, (UNWTO). It was one of the first designated as an International Tourism Education and Training Center and is currently an International Scientific Center of the UNWTO. The Hawai'i State Legislature provided seed funds to build the research capability, enabling the School to expand its library and computer capacities and complete numerous externally funded projects on Hawai'i and Pacific Island tourism by its faculty and graduate students. Studies on ecotourism, health and wellness tourism, transportation, economic impact of museums and cultural attractions, China tourism market, and tourism workforce development are a few examples of work by the Center that has directly benefitted the State of Hawai'i.

Discussions with TIM and UHERO have been initiated as to how we collaboratively can better utilize the wealth of visitor industry data to provide better information than is currently available through the UHERO data portal. HCR 273/HR 240 outlines a variety of possibilities that would encompass enhanced analytical and display capabilities for comparisons of visitor origin, participation rates at attractions and micro-level trends.

The TIM School now has the capability to analyze this data by a TIM professor who has previously created visitor data monitoring systems in Michigan and South Dakota. In order to increase the usefulness of the data, he worked with industry personnel through tutorials and demonstrations. This proposed project would also capitalize upon the expertise and efficiencies of the UHERO data portal to house dedicated webpages to provide these additional analyses of visitor industry-related data in order to enhance business, development and planning decision-making.