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SB 116, SD1
RELATING TO CULTURE AND THE ARTS
Senate Committees on Ways and Means

February 25, 2011

9:00 a.m.

Room 211

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) **SUPPORTS** SB116 SD1, which would require the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) to support traditional Hawaiian arts and cultural activities.

This measure represents a step in the right direction for the tourism industry to continue to support the perpetuation of Native Hawaiian cultural practices and values. Expanding and integrating cultural initiatives such as Native Hawaiian language, music, dance, and arts and crafts will have important outcomes. Through the promotion of Hawaiian language, visitors will better understand and appreciate the importance of our natural and cultural resources to the identity, culture and values of Native Hawaiians. As these cultural activities expose our visitors to our values, we hope that it encourages them to make a conscious effort to take care of our island while visiting.

Moreover, it is vital that HTA promote tourist activities that accurately portray Native Hawaiian culture to our visitors and kama'āina. HTA's promotion of authentic Native Hawaiian cultural activities will help direct much-needed revenue to cultural practitioners, which will enable them to continue to perpetuate and preserve their practices.

We do ask, however, that as HTA promotes the "cultural activities" proposed in SB116 SD1, it consider the impact of increased tourist participation on certain cultural practices. For example, increasing the number of visitors to a heiau could adversely affect the site and the cultural practices connected to the site. We encourage HTA to continue to dialogue with the Native Hawaiian community on such issues to ensure that Native Hawaiian practices are protected and enhanced.

OHA urges the Committee to PASS SB116 SD1. Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify.