



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor

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Testimony of
Mike McCartney
President and Chief Executive Officer
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
on
H.R. 97/H.C.R 129
**Urging the Inclusion of the People's Republic of China in the
Visa Waiver Program**

House Committee on Tourism
House Committee on International Affairs
Monday, March 19, 2012
9:30 a.m.
Conference Room 312

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) strongly supports H.R. 97 and H.C.R. 129, which requests the inclusion of the People's Republic of China in the Visa Waiver Program and easing of restrictions for business and leisure travel from the People's Republic of China.

The People's Republic of China represents a large, under-exploited market for Hawai'i's visitor industry. With over a billion people, Chinese visitors to Hawai'i, who spend an average of over \$350 per day, only numbered _____ visitors in 2011. A major reason for the low number of Chinese visitors is the difficulty in obtaining a visa to travel to the United States.

Since the passage of the Travel Promotion Act of 2007, the federal government has established the goal of increasing international travel to the United States, including making improvements to the visa program, implementing the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) and the expanding the visa waiver program.

The China market represents an important potential for growth for Hawai'i's visitor industry, and including the People's Republic of China in the Visa Waiver program is a key component of that growth.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Testimony for TOU/INT 3/19/2012 9:30:00 AM HCR46

Conference room: 312

Testifier position: Support

Testifier will be present: No

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Submitted on: 3/15/2012

Comments: