



**HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM**  
**A S S O C I A T I O N**



Testimony of George Szigeti  
President & CEO  
HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM ASSOCIATION  
Committee on Ways and Means  
Hearing on March 25, 2014, 9:10 A.M..  
HB 2169 HD1 Relating to Tourism Stimulus Incentives

Dear Chair Ige, Vice Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committee. My name is George Szigeti and I am the President and CEO of the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association.

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) is a statewide association of hotels, condominiums, timeshare companies, management firms, suppliers, and other related firms that benefit from and strengthen Hawai'i's visitor industry. Our membership includes over 150 lodging properties, representing over 48,000 rooms, and approximately 470 other Allied members. The lodging industry alone employs over 38,000 workers across the state of Hawai'i. As part of the broader visitor industry – which employs 1/6 of all workers and 1/5 of those in the private sector, and generated \$14.5 billion in visitor spending in 2013 – we represent one of Hawai'i's largest industries and a critical sector of the economy.

On behalf of HLTA, permit me to offer this testimony regarding HB 2169 HD1 Relating to Tourism Stimulus Incentives, which provides an income tax credit for wages paid to employees at new or renovated lodging properties and a general excise and use tax exemption for construction and renovation.

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association **supports** this measure because it provides incentives to encourage investment that would stimulate the revitalization of the state's inventory of aging hotel properties. Investing in our infrastructure is critical to our ability to compete against other destinations. Additionally, hotel construction and renovation would have the added benefit of generating construction and hospitality jobs throughout the state.

This measure can provide important incentives for new investment in our visitor industry and we urge its favorable consideration.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.