

LATE



March 13, 2014

Honorable Rosalyn Baker
Chair of the Senate Committee on Consumer Protection
Conference Room 229; 9:30AM

RE: H.B. 2215 H.D.1 – Relating to Travel Insurance

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Taniguchi and members of the committee:

On behalf of our members of the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA) that operate in the State of Hawaii, we urge your support of H.B. 2215 HD 1. This bill provides a workable solution to current licensing problems and inconsistencies our industry faces, and reflects the national standards adopted by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners (NAIC) and the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL).

Hawaii travel agents activities are normally limited to passing along general information about travel insurance. We do this usually through a brochure or website that is pre-packaged and distributed by a licensed limited lines travel insurance producer, such as a managing general agent. There is little financial incentive selling travel insurance, with it only representing on average less than two percent of a travel agency's total revenue. As travel agents, however, we do find that our customers value travel insurance as a means of protecting their trips and we feel it is important to make it available to them.

It is important to all parties that the rules governing the distribution of travel insurance be uniform, simple and broad in scope. We see no meaningful benefit to the public or the insurance and travel industries for the current licensing regime with respect to the relatively simple, highly beneficial and low cost activity.

For these reasons, ASTA'S Travel Agency members in Hawaii urge your support of H.B.2215 HD 1 and Hawaii's adoption of the standards passed by the National Association of Insurance Commissioner's (NAIC) and the National Conference of Insurance Legislators (NCOIL). House Bill 2215 HD 1 will: 1) better protect consumers; 2) clearly define accountability of the insurance provider; and 3) reduce an unnecessary economic burden on small businesses.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony of behalf of the ASTA Hawaii Chapter Membership and all Hawaii travel agents.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Goodenow, CTC
Past President ASTA Hawaii Chapter
President/Owner
HNL Travel Associates
1245 Young St. #203
Honolulu HI 96814
PH: 440-9651 direct