

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII

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Feb 05, 2018, 10:16 am



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the House Committee on
TOURISM**

**Tuesday, February 6, 2018
8:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 429**

**In consideration of
HOUSE BILL 2585
RELATING TO OCEAN SAFETY**

House Bill 2585 proposes to require Tourism Special Fund moneys to be made available to support state and county ocean safety programs. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget request and offers the following comments.**

The Department is supportive of any measure that allocates revenue derived from the tourism industry to the Department to offset the impacts of the tourism industry on specific Department programs especially those related to beach and ocean safety.

The Department's Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation currently provides an ocean safety program that includes safety education and such items as swim buoys. The Department's Division of State Parks currently contracts lifeguard services with the four counties for staffing costs and with this additional revenue would be able to provide ancillary equipment such as lifeguard towers, rescue vehicles and other necessary equipment.

The Department is open to any suggested percentage but would suggest 5% which would cover the Department's four lifeguard contracts as well as increasing ocean safety education outreach.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

ROBERT K. MASUDA
FIRST DEPUTY

JEFFREY T. PEARSON, P.E.
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

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Date & Time
Feb 05, 2018, 10:17 am

HB-2585

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 8:28:52 AM

Testimony for TOU on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	OCC Legislative Priorities	Support	No

Comments:

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Date & Time
Feb 05, 2018, 10:13 am

HB-2585

Submitted on: 2/2/2018 3:53:09 PM
Testimony for TOU on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Victor K. Ramos	Maui Police Department	Support	No

Comments:



LATE

Statement of
George D. Szigeti
Chief Executive Officer
Hawaii Tourism Authority
on
HB2585
Relating to the Ocean Safety
House Committee on Tourism
Tuesday, February 6, 2018
8:30am
Conference Room 429

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Date & Time
Feb 06, 2018, 7:45 am

Chair Onishi, Vice-Chair Fukumoto, and Committee Members:

The Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) offers the following **comments on HB2585**, which proposes to allocate a percentage of the Tourism Special Fund (TSF) to support state and county ocean safety programs, education and visitor awareness. HTA proposes that any additional funding for ocean safety programs, beyond what HTA already provides, should be allocated from Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) revenues, rather than the TSF.

HTA is actively involved in supporting State, county and community ocean safety programs, as well as programs focused on education and increasing visitor awareness of dangerous ocean conditions. These programs include the Junior Lifeguard Program, which HTA funded in 2017 with \$250,000 when the City and County of Honolulu's budget shortfall threatened to end the program. Through this program, approximately 2,000 young residents were trained as community water safety ambassadors to enhance their ocean safety awareness and water rescue skills. HTA also places ocean safety information in a prominent location on its GoHawaii mobile application and the gohawaii.com and hawaii beachesafety.com websites. HTA also provided water safety video footage for Hawaiian Airlines' in-flight water safety video.

HTA also contributed to the 2017 State of Hawaii Drowning Prevention and Ocean Safety Conference, the State Drowning and Aquatic Injury Prevention Advisory Committee's efforts to increase visitors and residents' water safety awareness and research projects focused on visitor water safety awareness. HTA recently updated its visitor satisfaction survey to separate swimming, snorkeling and diving to assist State agencies and improve tracking and monitoring of visitor water activities.

HTA plans to continue supporting programs and is actively engaged with its stakeholders across the State to identify new initiatives to increase ocean safety. Diverting a percentage of the TSF to fund "state and county ocean safety programs" would impair HTA's ability to fund community programs and allocate funding across the board based on rapidly changing circumstances. Therefore, HTA proposes that the bill be amended to allocate monies from TAT revenues, instead of from the TSF.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

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Date & Time
Feb 05, 2018, 10:14 am



HAWAIIAN LIFEGUARD ASSOCIATION



February 3, 2018

The Honorable Richard H.K. Onishi, Chair
The Honorable Beth Fukumoto, Vice Chair,
and Members
Committee on Tourism
House of Representatives
The Twenty Ninth Legislature
Regular Session of 2018

Chair Onishi, Vice Chair Fukumoto, and Members,

RE: HB 2585 RELATING TO OCEAN SAFETY

The Hawaiian Lifeguard Association (HLA) is the non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Hawaii to support the 500 professional ocean lifeguards employed by the counties in their efforts to reduce drownings and aquatic injuries at our beaches.

The Association accomplishes this goal by upholding the highest standards of professional lifeguard training and certification, delivering the annual Junior Lifeguard Program, and by developing and disseminating water safety prevention messages for visitors to and residents of our island state.

The HLA strongly supports HB 2585 which would require tourism special fund moneys to be made available to support state and county ocean safety programs.

Statistics compiled by the State Department of Health show that drowning is the leading cause of unintentional injury deaths for visitors to Hawaii, and that the overwhelming majority of these fatal drownings involve swimming and/or snorkeling in the ocean.

The HLA strongly supports HB 2585 and urges your favorable consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Ralph S. Goto
For the Board of Directors

P.O. Box 283324 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96828 • (808) 922-3888
Facsimile (808) 922-0411 • Email: lifeguards@aloha.com



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www.hgea.org

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Date & Time
Feb 06, 2018, 8:22 am

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The Twenty-Ninth Legislature, State of Hawaii
House of Representatives
Committee on Tourism

Testimony by
Hawaii Government Employees Association

February 6, 2018

H.B. 2585 – RELATING
TO OCEAN SAFETY

The Hawaii Government Employees Association, AFSCME Local 152, AFL-CIO supports the purpose and intent of H.B. 2585 which requires tourism special fund moneys to be made available to support state and county ocean safety programs.

Expanding lifeguard services and making sure proper equipment is available, is critical for the protection of the residents and visitors of Hawaii. With the number of beach patrons increasing and also the increase in the number of reported drownings, the state of Hawaii cannot afford to maintain its status quo with the current number of personnel. Because Hawaii's beautiful beaches are promoted around the world, it is the responsibility of Hawaii's lawmakers and leaders to ensure that safety and well-being is a top priority.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 2585.

Respectfully submitted,

for

Randy Perreira
Executive Director

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Date & Time
Feb 05, 2018, 10:15 am

HB-2585

Submitted on: 2/3/2018 4:33:08 PM

Testimony for TOU on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu	Support	No

Comments:

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RECEIVED
Date & Time
Feb 06, 2018, 7:47 am

HB-2585

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 9:41:40 PM

Testimony for TOU on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cherie Griffore	Malama Kona, Surfrider Foundation	Support	No

Comments:

Please increase funding and support our lifeguards that put their lives in danger to save other people's lives.

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**RECEIVED
Date & Time**

Feb 06, 2018, 7:45 am

HB-2585

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 7:00:37 PM

Testimony for TOU on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shannon Rudolph		Support	No

Comments:

Strongly Support

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RECEIVED
Date & Time
Feb 06, 2018, 7:46 am

HB-2585

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 9:19:09 PM

Testimony for TOU on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Tamara Paltin		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Representatives,

I work in Ocean Safety. We respond to the North, South and West coastlines of Maui Island. We only have 9 stations, 12 towers for the whole island. This is not adequate coverage to keep visitors and residents safe as we have already had 10 ocean related deaths in 2018 thus far. Ocean safety education is not adequate. Pu'u Keka'a on Ka'anapali where the Sheraton is has had 22 deaths. Lifeguards are employed by the county unless contracted to specific state beaches (Hapuna, Makena, Ke'e, etc). Neighbor islands in particular need more lifeguards at places where people are drowning and these are mainly state beaches and resort areas where the county does not have "jurisdiction." Something needs to be done. Last legislative session some representatives felt that taking away lifeguards limited liability protections would make it safer for folks at our beaches. Five weeks into 2018, it seems visitors to our beaches are more unsafe than ever before. We need coordinated efforts to promote ocean safety that collaborate between, county, state and tourist leaders - I hope this bill can do that. Give back lifeguard liability protection and extend it to hotels that step up and do the right thing that chip in funds to the county along with the state to extend lifeguard protections at heavily used dangerous state beaches. By working together in a coordinated way we can save lives.

Tamara Paltin

808-870-0052

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**RECEIVED
Date & Time**

Feb 06, 2018, 7:47 am

HB-2585

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 9:23:02 PM

Testimony for TOU on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
George Vierra		Support	No

Comments:

This is long overdue! We have had so many deaths in the past month alone. It is obvious there are many gaps in ocean safety education. The tourism industry needs to step in and protect the folks that they are enticing to come. Many people are not familiar with our treacherous ocean conditions and it is not their fault it is the visitor industry and the state that is spending so much money to bring folks here and not nearly enough on safety education and precautions. It is criminal that so many people are being led to their death or paralyzation. The statistics are out there, there are too many people being sent home in wheelchairs and bodybags for the state to continue to turn a blind eye. Please save lives

George Vierra, 250-3604

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**RECEIVED
Date & Time**

Feb 06, 2018, 7:48 am

HB-2585

Submitted on: 2/5/2018 11:47:54 PM

Testimony for TOU on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Wai'ala Ahn		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

please support HB2585 these first responders put their lives on the line; please support them by supporting HB2585

Mahalo.

LATE

**RECEIVED
Date & Time**

Feb 06, 2018, 7:49 am

HB-2585

Submitted on: 2/6/2018 5:26:58 AM

Testimony for TOU on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Barbara Barry		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha,

Please support HB 2585. Too many people are drowning in our oceans.

This is a preventable issue and with proper education, people will understand the dangers.

I would also launch an investigation into the full face snorkle masks. Maybe they should be banned if using them makes drowning more likely.

Mahalo,

Ms. Barbara Barry

Ha'iku

HB-2585

Submitted on: 2/6/2018 8:49:15 AM
Testimony for TOU on 2/6/2018 8:30:00 AM

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Date & Time
Feb 06, 2018, 8:58 am

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Deborah Mader	Hawai'i resident	Support	No

Comments:

I live in S Kihei and Ulua is our regular beach spot. There is a disproportionate rate of deaths and injuries at this particular beach (ULUA) in Wailea. There is public parking, scuba lessons, commercial activity, showers, bathrooms, a convenient "drop off" area with a paved ramp going straight down to nearly the water's edge. Andaz hotel and Wailea Elua Villas (all vacation rented) front this area . The "Wailea Path" which is a paved sidewalk stretching up and down the shore also means LOTS of visitors are coming to this beach. Sometimes there is even a Pacific Whale Foundation educational table set up on this beach. But NO LIFEGUARD!

We can't control people or water conditions- but I've observed that tourists tend to NOT go to places as often when there are no services (no parking, no showers, no bathrooms) and if they do there is a sense that they are on their own. But at Ulua it feels like there is everything you see on a life guarded beach- except the actual life guard. Flags should have been up and warning signs posted on Feb 4th when an 80 year old male from Alaska sadly and tragically died. I was there on Feb 4 and saw the emergency team trying so hard to save this man. Waves were crashing 6-8 feet on shore- no one in their right mind would snorkel in that. It's sad but I think preventable. I'm all for taking money from the tourism industry to fund more lifeguard stands- not just MOVE them around, but fund NEW stations AND protect our watermen and women from liability as they risk their lives to save others!

Mahalo nui
Deborah Mader
Kihei, HI Maui