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LAND
STATE PARKS

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, AND TECHNOLOGY
and
WATER AND LAND
and
PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Wednesday, January 31, 2018
1:30 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 414

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2446
RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACTS

Senate Bill 2446 proposes to require that a percentage of the Hawaii Tourism Authority's budget be transferred to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) and the counties if the number of visitor arrivals in the State exceeds ten million, or if the number of visitor arrivals in any county exceeds 6.5 million. **The Department appreciates 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, divisions, resources and infrastructure.

The Department calculates that this measure, once the visitor arrivals to the State exceed 10 million, would provide an additional \$6.2 million to the Department. This, in addition to the \$3 million already received, equals approximately \$9.2 million and coincidentally is approximately \$1 per visitor that would be allocated to the Department. Hawaii's State Parks, trails, and ocean recreation areas currently experience record numbers of visitors and resulting pressure on our resources and accommodations. This additional funding could be deployed immediately to improve the quality and management of the park visitor's experience.

The Department suggests that alternatively, an increase in the direct allocation to the Department and specific programs from the Transient Accommodations Tax or a specified amount from the Tourism Special Fund could accomplish the same purpose while providing more predictability and stability in its tourism-related budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/27/2018 7:22:02 AM

Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Shyla Moon		Support	No

Comments:

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/27/2018 12:08:25 PM

Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
alethea rebman		Support	No

Comments:

This is an excellent idea. Tourists are lured here with the promise of natural beauty but only the first part is adequately funded. The imbalance is not sustainable if we wish to continue having natural beauty.

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/27/2018 6:46:47 PM

Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
cheryl		Comments	No

Comments:

How will you know HOW the DLNR will use the funds they will receive for the purpose of infrastructure? What is your definition of resources? Natural resources or manpower? IS this part of the request that the AG made for funds for "in case of a large event?" IF So, then these funds should not be given to the DLNR. I think the committee needs to be more clear as to the use of the funds.



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COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, AND TECHNOLOGY

Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair

Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair

Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair

Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Wednesday, January 31, 2018

1:30 p.m.

Conference Room 414

SB 2446 Relating to Visitor Impacts.

MAJOR CONCERNS

Aloha Chairs Wakai, Rhoads and Nishihara and Members of the Committees,

Life of the Land is Hawai'i's own energy, environmental and community action group advocating for the people and `aina for 47 years. Our mission is to preserve and protect the life of the land through sound energy and land use policies and to promote open government through research, education, advocacy and, when necessary, litigation.

Sustainable use of natural resources is not compatible with unending increases in tourism. This bill seems to be focused on the future, when many believe the carrying capacity for tourists has already been achieved.

Nine million tourists came last year. The State forecast for 2020 is 9,900,000. This bill proposes that if tourist arrivals exceed 10,000,000 then part of the transient accommodations tax revenues must be allocated to support infrastructure and natural resources. However, if 9,900,000 arrive in the State, and 649,000 spend all their time on Kauai, there is no offsetting of funds. Too little, too late.

Mahalo, Henry Curtis, Executive Director

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/28/2018 10:18:37 PM

Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
De MONT R. D. CONNER	Ho'omanapono Political Action Committee (HPAC)	Support	Yes

Comments:

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/28/2018 10:26:28 PM

Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Rachel L. Kailianu	Ho`omana Pono, LLC	Support	Yes

Comments:

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/29/2018 10:31:55 AM

Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

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

Comments:

I stronly support this bill.

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/29/2018 3:34:05 PM

Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sheldon Plentovich		Support	No

Comments:

The impact visitors have on Hawaii's rare and special native ecosystems needs to be carefully considered. At the very least, funds generated by tourism should be used to protect areas (e.g., Ka Iwi coastline, Kaena Point, Shark's Cove) and species such as Green sea turtles which are harassed by hundreds of tourists daily at Alii-Haleiwa Beach Park. HTA attracts tourists by showing pictures of native ecosystems and species, but does not do enough to protect those species that increased numbers of tourists plunder.



Environmental Caucus
of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i

January 29, 2018

To: Committee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Technology,
Senator Glenn Wakai, Chair
Senator Brian T. Taniguchi, Vice Chair

Committee on Water and Land
Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair
Senator Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair

Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs
Senator Clarence K. Nishihara, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Re: SB 2446 Relating to Visitor Impacts
Hearing: Wednesday, January 31, 2018, 1:30 p.m. Room 414

Position: SUPPORT

The Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii supports SB 2446 because we need to protect our 'āina. The main driver of our economy, tourism, is dependent upon the protection of the natural beauty of this place and perpetuation of the indigenous culture. And the 'āina and culture must be protected for their own sakes!

Both of these aims always require investment in public infrastructure and strong commitment to protecting our land, ocean waters and natural resources.

This legislation would require that a percentage of the Hawaii tourism authority's budget be transferred to the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the counties if the number of visitor arrivals in the State exceeds ten million, or if the number of visitor arrivals in any county exceeds 6.5 million. This is a minimal and necessary check on the unfettered expansion in the number of tourists visiting the islands. It is a good start toward addressing the ever-worsening problem of runaway tourism in the islands.

Thank you for inviting us to testify on this measure.

Alan B. Burdick, Chair
Environmental Caucus
Burdick808@gmail.com 486-1018



SIERRA CLUB OF HAWAI'I
MĀLAMA I KA HONUA. *Cherish the Earth.*

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TOURISM, AND TECHNOLOGY

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, INTERGOVERNMENTAL, AND MILITARY AFFAIRS

Wednesday, January 31, 2018 1:30PM Conference Room 414

In SUPPORT of SB 2446 Relating to visitor impacts

Aloha Chairs Wakai, Rhoads, Nishihara, Vice Chairs Taniguchi, Gabbard, Wakai, and members of the Committees,

On behalf of our 20,000 members and supporters, the Sierra Club of Hawai'i, a member of the Common Good Coalition, **supports the intent of SB 2446**, requiring that a percentage of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA)'s budget be transferred to the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) and the counties if the number of visitor arrivals in the State exceeds 10 million, or if the number of visitor arrivals in any one county exceeds 6.5 million.

The islands of Hawai'i are blessed with an abundance of natural resources, diverse ecosystems, and stunning beauty unparalleled elsewhere on the Earth. This is the foundation of Hawai'i's tourism industry, the central economic driver throughout the islands. For this reason, we need to better protect Hawai'i's natural environment until such time our economy shifts away from a tourism-based economy.

The HTA has indeed maintained a steady rise in visitor arrivals for decades, with an annual budget approval in June 2017 in excess of \$88 million¹. The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) reported in November 2017 that, "Visitor arrivals are expected to increase 4.6 percent in 2017, 1.4 percentage point above the previous forecast. The forecast for visitor days in 2017 increased 1.2 percentage points to 4.6 percent. The 2017 forecast for visitor expenditure growth was revised upward to 6.7 percent, from 6.5 percent

¹ <http://www.staradvertiser.com/2017/06/30/hawaii-news/hta-approves-88-3m-annual-budget/>

growth projected in the previous forecast. For 2018, the growth rate of visitor arrivals, visitor days, and visitor expenditures are now expected to be 2.3 percent, 2.4 percent, and 3.9 percent, respectively”².

Meanwhile, the DLNR, mandated to manage and protect Hawai‘i’s finite natural resources and pristine beauty -- that which arguably draws the over 9 million tourists to our islands annually -- receives a meager 1.2% of the State budget. The outcome of this imbalance is a grossly underfunded and understaffed DLNR, which inevitably results in insufficient management of the very natural resources the HTA draws visitors here to experience.

By many accounts, visitor arrivals are already having deleterious impacts on our islands, leaving less and less for local communities to enjoy. Trails are overcrowded and insufficiently maintained, invasive species are swiftly spreading whilst native species are dwindling in numbers, reefs are experiencing bleaching and die-off in part from the chemical offloading from hordes of sunscreen-laden tourists entering the nearshore waters...the list goes on. We cannot wait for visitor arrivals to breach 10 million, as proposed in SB 2446. Therefore, **the Sierra Club of Hawai‘i recommends that the budget transfer suggested by this measure begin immediately.**

It is time we start leveling the scale and transferring a significant portion of HTA’s budget to DLNR; choice that will not only have positive outcomes for the natural beauty of Hawai‘i, but also for the local people and visitors who enjoy it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this important issue.

² <http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/visitor/tourism-forecast/>

From: [Kris Kokame](#)
To: [ETT Testimony](#); [WTL Testimony](#); [PSMTestimony](#)
Subject: SB 2446
Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 12:37:14 AM

Aloha. I support the proposed language for SB 2446 which would designate a portion of the transient accommodations tax revenues to the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the counties. In light of Palau's recent decision to have their visitors sign an "eco-pledge," I think at the very least taxes from tourists should go towards supporting the beauty and conservation of our islands. Not only that, but I think tourists would actually be very interested in learning more about the precious, rare species that can only be found in Hawai`i. As the "extinction capital of the world," we have so much potential to do better and help make the tourism industry a boon for the conservation of our ocean, land, and native species. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Mahalo!
Kris Kokame