



Statement of
George D. Szigeti
Chief Executive Officer
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
on
SB2446

LATE

Relating to Visitor Impacts

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

Chairs Wakai, Rhoads and Nishihara, Vice-Chairs Taniguchi and Gabbard and Committee Members:

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) is **opposed to SB2446 as drafted**, which would amend HTA's authorizing statute, HRS Chapter 201B, to allocate a substantial portion of HTA's budget to the general fund and the counties if certain visitor arrival numbers are met.

As written, SB2446 would severely restrict HTA's ability to perform its statutorily mandated functions. Faced with increased competition and ever shifting pressures that affect tourism to Hawai'i, reducing HTA's budget will undermine Hawai'i's position in the market and damage one of the State's major sources of revenue.

There is no question that visitors affect our infrastructure and natural resources and should contribute to the development, maintenance, safety and enhancement of the State's infrastructure and the protection and rehabilitation of our natural resources.

Currently, under HRS § 237D-6.5 Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) revenues are allocated to the special land and development fund administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources for the "protection, preservation, maintenance, and enhancement of natural resources, including beaches, important to the visitor industry."

In addition, HRS § 201B-11, requires that at least \$1 million of the Tourism Special Fund (TSF) be made available to “support efforts to manage, improve, and protect Hawai‘i’s natural environment and areas frequented by visitors.” Currently, HTA complies with and exceeds this funding requirement by allocating \$2.42 million in FY2018.

As we consider the impact of visitors to our islands, it is important to remember that the State derives substantial economic benefit from the tourism industry. Last year alone, the visitor industry supported 204,000 jobs and brought in \$1.96 billion in tax revenue. For a fifth straight year, HTA’s funding has remained flat at \$82 million annually. In the same period, collections of the TAT grew from \$395.2 million in FY2014 to \$508.38 million in FY2017.

For these reasons, HTA believes that there are more appropriate ways to fund the protection of our natural resources and reinvest in our infrastructure without impeding the State’s ability to attract and retain visitors. HTA supports increasing the allocation of TAT revenue under HRS § 237D-6.5 to the special land and development fund and increasing the allocation to the counties to enhance public infrastructure affected by visitors.

HTA looks forward to working with all State and county departments and agencies to manage the impact of visitor arrivals.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

LATE

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 7:57:22 PM
Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Sandy Webb	Mililani High School	Support	No

Comments:

Please pass SB 2446! I have been a high school science teacher in Hawaii for 25 years and my students and I have worked on monitoring and restoration projects in numerous locations on Oahu managed by the DLNR. These sites include Pahole and Ka`ena Natural Area Reserves and Pouhala Marsh and at each, my students are have been dismayed by the limited DOFAW staff and the overwhelming level of restoration work needed to manage these sites. All of these sites are vital to providing ecosystem services including healthy watersheds, fish populations and the protection of our numerous endangered species and yet all have been decimated by invasive species and development. Further, the DLNR does not have the resources to address our damaged streams - including Waikakalaua Stream which my students and I have voluntarily been monitoring for the last 10 years.

Article 11 of our state constitution requires that our natural resources are protected for future generations and in the last 25 years, my students and I have observed that the chronic underfunding of the DLNR has not resulted in the fulfillment of this goal. In light of projected climate change impacts, our state is developing resiliency plans and the protection of our watersheds and nearshore fisheries has to become a priority. This bill that provides guaranteed funding increase for the DLNR to better enable them to protect resources vital for everyone in the state. Further, this bill provides revenue from a source that does not negatively impact other programs and departments necessary to the citizens of Hawaii. Please pass this bill! Thank you for your consideration!

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 2:51:20 PM

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

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Mary Lacques		Support	No

Comments:

From: [Ilana Nimzi](#)
To: [ETT Testimony](#); [WTL Testimony](#); [PSMTestimony](#)
Subject: Testimony IN SUPPORT of SB2446 - Relating to Visitor Impacts
Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 3:06:14 PM



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.

Mahalo!
Ilana Nimz

LATE

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 4:33:21 PM

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

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

Comments:

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 4:47:31 PM

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

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Will Page	Page Marketing, Inc.	Oppose	No

Comments:

TO: Committee on Economic Development, Tourism and Technology

FR: Will Page, President of Page Marketing, Inc.

DT: 1/27/18

RE: Testimony OPPOSED to SB 2446

Aloha Senator Wakai, Senator Taniguchi and committee members,

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to testify.

SB 2446 is quite a package. This bill reflects the growing public discussion that Hawaii has too many visitors and that residents are always asked to stand aside to make way for visitors.

Under this bill, the Hawaii Tourism Authority will have its budget cut should the number of visitors rise above 10 million, or, more than 6.5 million in any one county. This puts extreme pressure on the HTA to balance its spending to avoid these cumulative numbers or to allow the quality of its programs to fall below acceptable standards in terms of results, or have its budget cut.

Bill 2446 encourages mediocracy and punishes outstanding performance. Why not have the HTA advertise Mexico if we really, really want to decrease tourism to the islands. Or help Puerto Rico by advertising its Caribbean vacations.

We could also ask all other departments of the State of Hawaii to cut their budgets by a similar amount. So that the costs we face in taxes do not need to be extracted from local residents.

HTA's budget is cut, these funds are redirected to DLNR to offset the negative impacts of tourism. Supposedly this will happen without bankrupting the state of Hawaii.

I do not believe that this bill has been vetted. I'm not in favor of it.

Mahalo,

Will Page

PRESIDENT PAGE MARKETING, INC.

LATE

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 6:09:52 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lois Crozer		Support	No

Comments:

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SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 6:57:44 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Cory Harden		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha legislators,

We need to stop starving the goose that lays the golden eggs.

mahalo,

Cory Harden

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/30/2018 8:31:59 PM

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



Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Richard Furst		Support	No

Comments:

I am writing to express my support for SB2446, to provide funding for DLNR from Hawaii tourism-related sources. Like many residents, I enjoy our wonderful natural resources, parks, beaches, and other outdoor amenities. These resources are one of the main reasons why people flock from around the globe to visit Hawaii. It is only fitting that some portion of the money generated by tourism goes to support conservation and improvement for our State's natural resources. That is why I urge you to pass SB2446 into law.

Mahalo for your kokua,

Richard Furst

Aina Haina

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/31/2018 3:07:49 AM

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

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marian M. Chau	Lyon Arboretum	Support	No

Comments:

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/31/2018 7:31:31 AM

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

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Jon Myers	Homeowner	Support	No

Comments:

As residents of Lanikai, located on the hillside below the pill boxes, we are always aware of the tremendous tourist foot traffic on the Lanikai trail. The fact, for Hawaii, is that the Internet has been terrific for enhancing visitor appreciation of all that our Islands have to offer *and* the Internet has led to dangerous overuse of many areas. Dangerous because overuse means degradation resulting in higher injuries and, of course, the nuisance factor - something we in Lanikai know a great deal about. The State promotes Hawaii tourism. The State must recognize that tourism has costs and the State must, for its own long term good, cover those costs.

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/31/2018 8:09:53 AM

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

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Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Scott Whiting		Support	No

Comments:

From: [Daryl Fujiwara](#)
To: [ETT Testimony](#); [WTL Testimony](#); [PSMTestimony](#)
Subject: SB 2446
Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2018 9:23:03 PM

LATE

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.

Mahalo!
Daryl Fujiwara

LATE

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/31/2018 9:39:56 AM
Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Chow Yu		Support	No

Comments:

Hawaii is one of the most desired travel destinations because of its nature beauty. Many of our nature resources are being consumed by the thousands of visitors coming here each year. I believe the bill would help provide the needed resources to maintain, preserve and repair Hawaii and to ensure her nature beauty will be available for generations to come.

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/31/2018 10:58:20 AM

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

LATE

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Lea Hong	The Trust for Public Land	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Wakai and Committee Members -

The Trust for Public Land strongly supports SB2446 and all efforts to increase DLNR funding to manage and maintain the natural resources upon which our tourism industry relies. My apologies for this late testimony and that I will not be able to attend this hearing due to a scheduling conflict.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify

Lea Hong, Hawaiian Islands State Director

LATE

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/31/2018 11:01:25 AM
Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Donna L. Ching		Support	No

Comments:

Dear Legislators, thank you for your unequivocal support of this critically important bill. Hawaii's tourism industry depends entirely on the maintenance of our beautiful, uniquely safe (from venomous and invasive species) environment. DLNR and other public and non-profit organizations dedicated to preserving and protecting our islands and oceans are woefully underfunded. Using visitor revenue such as the TAT to fund the stewardship of our aina is a MUST. Please advance SB 2466 unanimously! Aloha, Donna L. Ching

LATE

Testimony of Kawika Winter, Ph.D.

Strongly Supporting SB 2446

Senate Committee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Technology

Senate Committee on Water and Land

Senate Committee on Public Safety, Intergovernmental, and Military Affairs

January 30, 2018

Aloha Chairs Wakai, Rhoads, Nishihara, and the committee members of ETT/WTL/PSM,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony for SB 2446 relating to visitor impacts. I am a resource manager who is actively engaged, both professionally and personally, in community-based resource management in the community of Hā'ena, Kaua'i. Our community is home to Hā'ena State Park, and is the gateway to the famed Nāpali Coast State Park. The picturesque beauty of our area attracts nearly 1 million tourists into our community every year, which results in major impact to our natural and cultural resources.

In the course of my work I regularly engage with various divisions of DLNR which operate in Hā'ena—such as State Parks Division, Division of Aquatic Resources, Division of Forestry and Wildlife, Division of Conservation and Resources Enforcement, Office of Conservation and Coastal Lands, Division of Boating and Ocean Recreation, and State Historic Preservation Division. I can personally attest to how understaffed these divisions are, and how the lack of staff in these divisions has been detrimental to the natural and cultural resources of our community.

We need to ensure that the natural and cultural resources of our State are not destroyed by the onslaught of tourists. DLNR has deidcated staff, but there are not enough of them to protect the resources of our 'āina. Passing SB 2446 would be a tremendous step forward in securing the funding needed to support DLNR in its efforts. I hope that you will support its passage through your respective committees.

Mahalo,



Kawika Winter, Ph.D.

Hā'ena, Halele'a, Kaua'i

LATE

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/31/2018 11:29:02 AM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
janice palma-glennie		Support	No

Comments:

Aloha, as a person who has advocated for strong protections of our `aina for over 40 years, i ask that you support SB2446, a bill that would transfer 15% of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority revenue to DLNR.

HTA advocates for more visitors, but what do those visiors experience once they come to hawai`i? more and more often, it is decimated natural and cultural resources. and, of course, the more important issue is the impact that degradation of resources has on Hawaii's people.

it's clear that funding our environmental and cultural priorities is key to having those resources protected. Please insure that funding is increased by supporting this bill.

mahalo.

LATE

SB-2446

Submitted on: 1/31/2018 3:49:02 PM
Testimony for ETT on 1/31/2018 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Robin Kaye		Support	No

Comments:

This is a long-needed piece of legislation. Tourists come to Hawaii in large part because of our natural environment -- our beautiful beaches, clean ocean waters, fresh-grown food and amazing array of birds, fish and mammals. DLNR gets such a small portion of our taxpayer dollars; taking some funding from our visitors to help DLNR keep this a place visitors wish to visit -- and residents continue to preserve -- is a very good idea.