



## DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

MIKE MCCARTNEY  
DIRECTOR

CHUNG I. CHANG  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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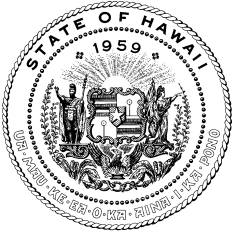
Statement of  
**MIKE MCCARTNEY**  
Director  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**  
Wednesday, April 14, 2021  
3:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of  
**GM 798**  
Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the  
Hawai'i Tourism Authority,  
Gubernatorial Nominee, **KEITH DOWNING**,  
for a term to expire at noon on **06-30-22**.

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Miscalucha and members of the Committee.

I am writing in **strong support** of Keith "Keone" Downing, to serve on the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA). Raised in a family that respected Hawai'i's natural gifts, Keone's breadth of knowledge of Hawai'i's beaches and ocean and the importance of managing these resources for future generations will be an asset for HTA. He understands the importance of finding the balance between the needs of the community and of the visitor industry by listening to others and 'getting out there' to actually experience it for himself. As a small business owner that caters to locals and visitors, Keone receives firsthand insight. At this time when we can reinvent the visitor industry, Keone is the right person for the position.

I strongly support the confirmation of Gubernatorial Nominee, Keone Downing, to serve on the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.



# HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE STATE OF HAWAII

235 South Beretania Street, 5<sup>TH</sup> Floor, Honolulu, HI 96813 | energy.hawaii.gov

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

SCOTT J. GLENN  
CHIEF ENERGY OFFICER

(808) 587-3807

Testimony of  
**SCOTT J. GLENN, Chief Energy Officer**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**  
Wednesday, April 14, 2021, 3:00 PM  
Via Videoconference

In SUPPORT of  
**GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 798, KEITH DOWNING**  
**TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY**  
**(Written Testimony Only)**

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Misalucha, and Members of the Committee, I am writing in support of the appointment of Mr. Downing to serve on the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority.

Mr. Downing has a deep appreciation of the role of tourism in Hawai'i and the benefits and impacts to Hawai'i's environment. He understands the threat of the climate crisis to Hawai'i's natural resources and tourism industry and the role of decarbonizing the economy to enhance Hawai'i's resilience and position Hawai'i to continue as a tourism destination leader in a world.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



To: Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development,  
Tourism and Technology  
Chair Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair Bennette E. Misalucha,  
Chris Lee, Gil Riviere, and Kurt Favella

From: *Friends of Kewalos*

Date: April 12, 2021

Subject: In Strong Support of confirming Keith Downing for Board of  
Directors of Hawaii Tourism Authority

Aloha,

Keith Downing, better known as Keone Downing, comes from a family of environmentalists. His father, George Downing, was one of the founding members of Save Our Surf (SOS). Keone, as an avid surfer, believes that protecting and enhancing Hawaii's natural resources, such as our beach parks, our oceans, our hiking trails, to be "second to none" should be a top priority with HTA with an emphasis of creating a balance between community use and visitor use. If HTA invests more money into this priority, it will not only enrich the visitors experience but more importantly bring more enjoyment for the people of Hawaii.

Friends of Kewalos believes that Hawaii cannot sustain ten million visitors a year. HTA will be one of the major players to find a balance between our quality of life and the economy.

We are confident that Keone with his background as an advocate for the environment and the community, will bring this vital perspective to the Board.

Mahalo for this opportunity to share our mana'o.

Sincerely,  
Ron Iwami  
*Friends of Kewalos*, President  
[ronald@kewalo.org](mailto:ronald@kewalo.org)

*To Protect, Preserve, and Malama Kewalo Basin Park and the surrounding shoreline and ocean to ensure  
that the recreational user will continue to have access  
and the ability to enjoy the area for future generations to come.*

[www.kewalos.org](http://www.kewalos.org)



April 11, 2021

To whom it may concern:

Aloha,

I would like to take a moment to recognize Keone Downing and his unwavering commitment to our community as you consider him to be on the Board for Hawaii Tourism Authority. While the Downing Family has established itself as a pillar in our community for many decades, Mr. Downing has gone above and beyond to fulfill the expectations of his family name. He has shown commitment to the development and bettering of all areas of Hawai'i for the benefit of the residents as well as our visitors.

Growing up in the ocean, he has gained a wealth of knowledge that aids his work in supporting its conservation and preservation. He has experienced the degradation at our beaches and facilities, and his awareness of the issues and desire to improve the conditions would make him an excellent addition to the board. Integrity and honesty are virtues that are clearly important to Mr. Downing, and he will put what is best for the aina and the Kama'aina before all else. At the same time, he understands the importance of tourism for the islands and the balance that needs to be found in welcoming and educating our visitors and looking out for the locals and our natural resources.

Mr. Downing has dedicated himself to developing our community to progress forward so that our hospitality may extend to all aspects of the community- for our locals and our visitors. His experience, his heart, and his vision for Hawai'i would be a great addition to the Board of Hawaii Tourism Authority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Soo Stover', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Soo Stover

Owner

Holokai Catamaran

**GM-798**

Submitted on: 4/12/2021 2:40:06 PM

Testimony for EET on 4/14/2021 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Daniel Ikaika Ito	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Wakai a me Vice Chair Misalucha,

I'm submitting testimony in support of Keith Keone Downing in regards to GM 798. I've had the honor of knowing Keith Downing as "Uncle Keone" since I was a college student, and consider him a mentor whose mana'o and guidance I seek as my career has evolved over the past 20 years. Before I knew him as "uncle" I knew Keone Downing as the 1990 Quiksilver In Memory of Eddie Aikau Big Wave Invitational champion. For me, Keone's career as a professional surfer was always accentuated by the fact that he is a graduate of the Kamehameha Schools. As a fellow alum and a 12-year Kamehameha Schools Surf Team coach, I'm constantly telling the student athletes about Keone's pro surfing achievements, community service and business leadership as a model for young Hawaiians to be productive members of society. During Keone's service on the Board of Land and Natural Resources he was a shining example of a servant leader, and I'm still impressed with the amount of time he put in due diligence and listening to multiple opinions from the community when it came to controversial topics like the construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope on Mauna Kea. This is something I take to heart as my kuleana on the Hawai'i Community Development Authority. Uncle Keone has been a tremendous mentor for me in this regard, and I appreciate his willingness to pick up my phone call and to talk story with me when I have challenges. One of the things I most appreciate about Keone is his use of design thinking to find solutions, financing and community support to make infrastructure improvements. His balanced perspective of preserving natural resources and taking care of local people to create a sustainable and thriving visitor industry would be an extremely valuable asset for the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. Keone's upbringing from a mother that worked at Hilton Hawaiian Village and a father that was a legendary beach boy gives him an incredible amount of experiences and knowledge to be a thought leader as the HTA navigates a post-pandemic Hawai'i. I humbly ask you to consider Keith Keone Downing to be a member of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority board in the best interest for my keiki and the future of Hawai'i.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

Daniel Ikaika Ito

Cultural Specialist, Hawai'i Community Development Authority



**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism**  
Senator Glenn Wakai Chair  
Senator Bennette Misalucha, Vice Chair

Wednesday, April 14, 2021  
3:00 PM Hearing

**Governor's Message No. 798**

**Consideration and Confirmation of Gubernatorial Nominee Keith Downing  
to the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority**

Aloha Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Misalucha and Committee Members:

I respectfully extend my full support for the Governor's nomination of Keith 'Keone' Downing as a member of the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA). As the HTA emerges with new ideals and strengths from the past year's pandemic experience, all are seeking a more comfortable balance between tourism, Hawai'i's worn and temporarily recovering environment, and a better quality of life for our established communities. As a former member of the State's Board of Land and Natural Resources from 2015 through 2019, Keone is an excellent choice for the HTA to move forward with this balance in mind.

Notably, over the past year the HTA has engaged in a strategic vision to manage tourism in a responsible and regenerative way through collaborative community-based Destination Management Action Plans for each County, intended to protect cherished Hawaiian places and traditions by respecting Hawai'i's Natural Resources and Hawaiian Culture together with the visitor industry now seeking compatibility with Hawai'i's established communities. As was his father George Downing, Keone is a knowledgeable and confident communicator toward these objectives.

Thus, Keone's extensive knowledge of shoreline resources, including preservation of Hawai'i's oceans, coral reefs, waves and beaches, and his comprehension of sound planning practices together with his communication skills, will greatly contribute to this balance and the implementation of HTA's Destination Management Action Plans to create tourism's new message equally benefitting Hawai'i's environment, economy and sustainability. Therefore the Senate's consideration and confirmation of Keith 'Keone' Downing as a member of the HTA Board of Directors is strongly supported.

Sincerely,

Michelle Spalding Matson



**GM-798**

Submitted on: 4/12/2021 6:51:10 PM

Testimony for EET on 4/14/2021 3:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Present at Hearing</b>
Jeannine Johnson	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

I support the nomination of Keith Keone Downing to serve on the Board of Directors of the Hawaii Tourism Authority. I have testified before Mr. Downing when he was on the Board of Land and Natural Resources and found him to be an excellent advocate for native Hawaiians as well as our natural and historic resources. The HTA must pivot if it wants to remain relevant as well as malama that which makes Hawai'i so special. Mr. Downing will help that transformation. Mahalo.

WILLIAM W. SAUNDERS, JR.

*Attorney at Law  
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Honolulu, Hawai'i 96816  
WWSRainbow@gmail.com  
Phone: (808) 375-3588*

April 13, 2021

To: The Senate Committee on  
Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

Re: Confirmation of Keith Downing to the HTA Board

Re: **My Testimony Supporting the Confirmation of Mr. Downing**

I am writing to voice my strong support for the appointment of Keith “Keone“ Downing to the Board of the Hawai’i Tourism Authority. I’ve known Mr. Downing and his family longer than I can remember, probably over 50 years. I believe he will be an excellent addition to the Board, especially at this challenging time as Hawaii seeks to recover from the pandemic’s economic devastation and rebuild its tourist industry in sustainable way.

Here are some of the reasons I believe that Mr. Downing is particularly suited for this position:

1. He has served as a member on the Board of Land and Natural Resources and I have witnessed in person his conduct in their hearings. In my experience, he was always well prepared, knowledgeable about the subject, asked pertinent and insightful questions, carefully considered comments of applicants, witnesses and fellow board members, and otherwise performed his job with dedication and diligence.
2. He grew up in a family which made its living in large part on the beaches of Waikiki providing beach boy services to visitors. Since early in the last century, when the Kahanamoku brothers plied the same trade, long before electronic media made the job easier, beach boys in Hawaii were the ambassadors of tourism and their sharing of Aloha with visitors helped spread the word about Hawaii’s unique culture and environment. His father, George, carried that ethic forward into the last half of the century and passed it on to his family. Keone is intimately familiar with the need to carefully nurture this industry, as well as the need to do it with respect and aloha for visitors.
3. Mr. Downing is a small business owner who knows how to keep an eye on the bottom line, who knows the ups and downs of Hawaii’s fragile economy, and who knows the importance of the visitor industry to Hawaii’s working people.

4. Mr. Downing is a man of the sea who also grew up absorbing his father's concern and dedicated work toward the protection of Hawai'i's ocean environment and its residents' access to it. He worked with his father on those issues and now carries that work forward as head of the Surfing Education Foundation, a nonprofit affiliated with Save Our Surf, Hawai'i's first ocean-oriented environmental organization.

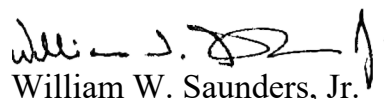
I recently spoke with Mr. Downing about the pandemic, its effect on his business and our state, the reopening of tourism and the challenges that lie ahead for the industry. I was impressed with his perspective on the need to meet Hawai'i's desire for tourist dollars while also maintaining our residents' quality of life.

He reminded me of the importance of word-of-mouth advertising and reviews that visitors provide to their friends upon returning home. He pointed out that decaying infrastructure like run-down beach park facilities and poorly maintained roads, along with the overcrowding of beaches and other attractions, and residents understandably disgruntled with poorly-managed resources, all have a very negative effect on the impression Hawai'i leaves with visitors. He sees clearly the need to carefully address these critical issues so that Hawai'i can maintain its rank as a first-class destination for visitors at the same time it remains a wonderful place to live.

I believe that Mr. Downing has the experience, knowledge, wisdom, vision and Aloha to help us bring back tourism in a way that satisfies the desires of visitors but balances that with the needs of our residents. I strongly urge that you confirm him as a member of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

  
William W. Saunders, Jr.