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Statement of
JOHN DE FRIES

Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Monday, March 29, 2021
3:10 PM
State Capitol
via videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 175
SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 140

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Misalucha, and members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism: the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) **supports** SCR175/SR140, which requests HTA to develop an implementation plan based on tourism hot spots identified in county Destination Management Action Plans (DMAPs).

What is being proposed in SCR175/SR140 is already in the works. While HTA is not an enforcement agency, it can be a catalyst to bring together respective state and county agencies, the community and private sector to develop solutions that address hotspot sites and areas. Thus far, the DMAPs for Kaua'i and Maui Nui have been published, the Hawai'i Island DMAP is being finalized, and the O'ahu DMAP process just got underway this month. Each DMAP outlines actions, the department/agency/organization that is the lead and support for implementation, and phasing over the course of three years. The DMAPs also list tourism hotspots, and HTA will monitor and work with the respective agencies as needed to help mitigate issues.

Maui Nui DMAP: <https://www.hawaiiitourismauthority.org/media/6860/hta-maui-action-plan.pdf>

Kaua'i DMAP: <https://www.hawaiiitourismauthority.org/media/6771/hta-kauai-dmap.pdf>

HTA's community-based tourism program: <https://www.hawaiiitourismauthority.org/what-we-do/hta-programs/community-based-tourism/>

We appreciate the opportunity to testify in **support** of SCR175/SR140. I will be available to answer any questions.

SCR-175

Submitted on: 3/27/2021 2:52:39 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/29/2021 3:10:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Frank Haas	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

Aloha Chair Wakai and Vice Chair Misalucha,

I am pleased to provide testimony in strong support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 175.

I have been involved in Hawaii tourism for many years and am currently a consultant focused on the issue of tourism and hospitality management in the Hawaii, the US and abroad. While many destinations in the world have embraced active tourism management, it seems that Hawaii is lagging in this regard. Many of the citizen concerns about the negative impacts of tourism are the result of the lack of effective management over the years. We have now reached a point where some citizens question tourism's value. Like so many economic issues, tourism's value depends on our willingness to manage it so that it contributes to - rather than detracts from - our quality of life.

This resolution recognizes that the first steps have been taken in moving toward a tourism management mentality with 1) the 2020 Hawaii Tourism Strategic Plan, 2) the development of county-based, community supported Destination Management Plans, 3) a change of management focus at the Hawaii Tourism Authority. All those steps are necessary but insufficient to effectively change the nature of tourism and its impacts as tourism volumes rebound. Without specific plans and resources, they are just good intentions.

SCR 175 provides missing elements to actualize the good intentions of the foregoing: 1) development of a specific plan related to specific impact areas, 2) determination of resources and initiatives needed to address the impacts, 3) multi-jurisdictional and community involvement, and 4) development of a specific timetable.

Destinations in the U.S. and abroad (particularly in Europe) have embraced and empowered management plans to address what has become known as "overtourism." As a world class destination, Hawaii cannot lag and, in fact, should be in the lead in tourism destination management. Adoption of SCR 175 will be an important step in that direction.

Mahalo for considering my testimony. .

