

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

House Committee on Finance

Wednesday, March 29, 2023

3:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 and Videoconference

In Support

S.B. No. 304, S.D. 2, H.D. 2, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Office of the Governor supports S.B. No. 304, S.D. 2, H.D. 2, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees. Hawaii's oceans, reefs, streams, waterfalls, forests, other natural resources, and ecosystems are part of Hawaii's natural and cultural heritage and precious resources to an estimated 1,400,000 Hawaii residents. These natural resources are also primary attractions to the State's 9,720,000 visitors estimated to come to Hawaii in 2023, according to the forecast of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. The number of visitor arrivals to our State is forecasted to grow to 10,330,000 in 2025.

The economic benefits of visitor travel to our State are significant. Tourism provides jobs, enhances economic growth and development, and generates revenue; however, there is greater policy focus on recognizing *all* impacts of tourism on our State, particularly the effects of tourism on our natural resources and natural environment. The impacts on Hawaii's natural resources, consequences of both residents and visitors, is an overarching concern and one of the priorities of this Administration.

This is one of several measures that recognizes that human-induced impacts on our environment, including increased pollution, stress on our natural resources, soil degradation, and natural habitat loss, are cause for concern and immediate action. Hawaii's natural resources are invaluable to all who live here and primary attractions for those who visit our State.

It is well recognized that Hawaii residents already contribute to the protection and management of the State's natural resources through taxes, environmental care, subsistence and cultural practices, and the values and practices embodied in the Hawaii State Constitution. However, the State has not yet dedicated enough financial resources to address the impacts by visitors. This measure establishes a visitor impact fee program within the Department of

Testimony of Office of the Governor
S.B. No. 304, S.D. 2, H.D. 2
March 29, 2023
Page 2

Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) in which DLNR will collect a fee from visitors through a license to visit a state park, beach, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. The allocation of revenues collected from the fees will be used to protect, restore, and manage natural and cultural resources impacted by visitors.

The Office of the Governor appreciates the Committee's consideration of S.B. No. 304, S.D. 2, H.D. 2 and other measures that seek to ensure that the impacts of visitor use on state parks, beaches, forests, hiking trails, and other state natural areas are compensated through resources that address the environmental footprint of visitors. We look forward to working with the Legislature on legislation that establishes a means to offset the detrimental impacts of visitor use on designated state natural resources, and protects, restores, and manages Hawaii's natural resources. Such legislation will have a positive effect on both the visitor experience and on residents through care and protection of our State's natural and cultural resources.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



**TESTIMONY OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
KA 'OIHANA O KA LOIO KUHINA
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE, 2023**

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 304, S.D. 2, H.D. 2, RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES.

BEFORE THE:

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

DATE: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 308

TESTIFIER(S): Anne E. Lopez, Attorney General, or
Daniel A. Morris, Deputy Attorney General

Chair Yamashita and Members of the Committee:

The Department of the Attorney General (Department) supports this bill and provides the following comments.

The purpose of the bill is to establish, within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), a visitor impact fee program to collect a fee from and issue licenses to non-Hawaii residents to allow them to visit designated state parks, beaches, forests, hiking trails, or other natural areas on state land. The bill authorizes the DLNR to adopt rules implementing the program and designating the state-owned areas subject to the licensing requirement. The bill also establishes a civil penalty in the form of a fine for not paying the fee, although implementation of the penalty provisions is delayed for a period of five years.

A visitor impact fee special fund is established for the fees collected. The special fund is administered by the DLNR, and allocations from the special fund may be used for projects that "help offset adverse environmental impacts caused by visitors, ensure that the State's natural resources are maintained for continued use by licensees, or both." Page 9, lines 4-7. Examples of permissible projects include those that "protect, restore, or enhance terrestrial and marine natural resources impacted by heavy usage of licensees"; "increase the resilience and adaptation of Hawaii's natural resources with environmentally beneficial strategies to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change, including coastal erosion, sea level rise, damage to reefs, ocean acidification, coral

bleaching, damage to land resources, and other impacts exacerbated by licensees"; or "remove and control invasive species and propagate and plant native species in state-owned recreational areas utilized by licensees." Page 9, line 12, through page 10, line 3.

Because this bill distinguishes between residents and non-Hawaii residents, it could theoretically be the subject of a lawsuit founded upon the United States Constitution. The Department concludes that such a lawsuit would likely fail.

First, one of the features of this bill is that the legislation provides the framework and authority by which the DLNR will designate those areas of state land that will appropriately be covered by the license, with the license requirement beginning on a date established by the DLNR. Page 6, line 14 through 19. This feature will allow the DLNR to tailor the license program by promulgating administrative rules to meet constitutional standards. Because the bill itself requires rules to implement, any meaningful constitutional challenge would likely be to the administrative rules and not the bill.

Second, the U.S. District Court for the District of Hawaii has already upheld as constitutional an entrance fee on non-residents *for a single area*—the Hanauma Bay Natural Area Reserve—and *for a single visit*. See *Daly v. Harris*, 215 F. Supp. 2d 1098 (D. Haw. 2002), *aff'd*, 117 Fed. Appx. 498 (9th Cir. 2004) (upholding nonresident fees at Hanauma Bay). Further, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in that case summarily adjudicated an appeal from that decision, holding that challenges based upon the Equal Protection Clause and Privileges and Immunities Clause failed because "there is a sound and reasonable basis for requiring a small fee from nonresidents 13 and older," "no fundamental right is thereby significantly burdened," and "[t]he ordinance is rationally related to the preservation of Hanauma Bay." 117 Fed. Appx. at 500 (citing *Baldwin v. Fish & Game Comm'n of Mont.*, 436 U.S. 471 (1978)). And this analysis would appear to apply to a license that would allow non-residents to access substantially greater areas of land with unlimited access for up to one year, with the fees paid for such license going to the preservation of Hawaii's world-class natural resources, which attract so many recreational visitors every year—along with the

corresponding impact caused by these visitors. See *id.* ("Hanauma Bay Nature Preserve is a place of rare beauty, a treasure to be cherished.").

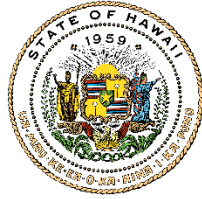
Third, there is the requisite nexus between the visitor impact fee and the permissible uses of the special fund for projects that are targeted to address visitor impacts. *State v. Medeiros*, 89 Hawai'i 361, 366 (1999) (distinguishing a fee from a tax). The current version of this bill provides a targeted array of permissible uses for the special fund that will allow fees to be used to address and remediate visitor impacts.

Fourth, because the DLNR will designate the areas where a license is required by rule, and because the DLNR shall properly place signs at these locations, see page 6, line 20, through page 7, line 2, sufficient notice can be provided to those requiring a license, with agency enforcement efforts focused on areas of greatest need.

Thank you for the opportunity to make these comments in support of this bill.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the House Committee on
FINANCE

Wednesday, March 29, 2023
3:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308, Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 304, SENATE DRAFT 2, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

Senate Bill 304, Senate Draft 2, House Draft 2 proposes to: 1) establish the Visitor Impact Fee Program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department), through which the Department will collect a fee from visitors for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area; 2). establish the Visitor Impact Fee Special Fund; 3) require a report to the Legislature on strategic plan and timetable for objectives and implementation of the Visitor Impact Fee Program; and 4) appropriate funds for the Visitor Impact Fee Strategic plan and positions for the Visitor Impact Fee Program. **The Department strongly supports this measure, provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in the Department's Executive Budget request.**

The establishment of a green fee is a vital piece to closing the large gap between existing and needed funding for the management of Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources. A green fee would fund land and water protection and stewardship projects that would improve our ability to care for our unique and fragile resources, move Hawai'i forward in addressing climate change, and mitigate the impacts of Hawai'i's tourism economy. A green fee program would bolster the State's existing investments in natural and cultural resource management, protect public trust resources, and help fill Hawai'i's conservation funding gap. Increased funding via a green fee will also allow state and county agencies to apply for federal grant opportunities that require local matching funds.

If the Legislature would like to increase transparency and opportunities for public comment in the process of project ranking, the Department suggests that the original bill's language creating a volunteer commission be added. The volunteer commission would be advisory and would rank project applications and make recommendations to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (Board) in a public meeting that complies with the sunshine law. The Board meetings are also public and comply with the sunshine law,

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT
LAURA H.E. KAAKUA
FIRST DEPUTY
M. KALEO MANUEL
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

which would give applicants and the public two opportunities to provide comments on the proposed projects.

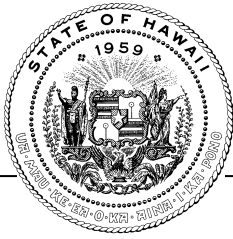
Additional Supporting Information

Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources provide our drinking water and sustain all life on our islands, are huge economic assets and prime attractions of our tourism industry, and support the well-being, health, and identity of our communities. A University of Hawai'i study examined the various services provided by O'ahu's Ko'olau forests - including drinking water recharge, flood prevention, water quality, carbon storage, biodiversity, cultural, aesthetic, recreational, and commercial values. These services were calculated to have a net present value of between \$7.4 and \$14 billion. In the Pearl Harbor Aquifer, full forest protection (~20,000 acres) saves the water utility \$26 to \$39 million per year (after 50 years) in replacement costs. Coral reefs – the first line of defense to large ocean swells - annually protect \$836 million in averted damages to property and economic activity in Hawai'i. Despite the value of our forests, coastlines, cultural sites, and oceans, Hawai'i invests less than 1% of the total state budget into maintaining these assets.

The establishment of green fees in several other tourism-focused economies has allowed places like the Republic of Palau, Galapagos Islands, New Zealand, and the Maldives to allow greater investment in their natural resources - reducing the overall impact of tourism on their environments, improving the quality of visitor experiences, and supporting community stewardship of these special places. Visitors and many residents do not mind paying a green fee because they know it goes back to caring for the beautiful places and resources they have come to enjoy. For example, the Department's Division of State Parks executed a parking and entry fee increase for out of state visitors during the pandemic in 2020. This action, coupled with the return of the visitor industry, contributed to a substantial increase in special fund revenue to address decades of deferred repair and maintenance at state parks across the State. The fee increase was modest and the out of state visitor is accustomed to paying fees at other municipal, state and national Parks. Additionally, when the visitor learns the parking and entry revenue is specifically reinvested in state park management, they are supportive. The Department would like this and any other green fee proposals to emphasise the importance of maintaining these separate, previously established fees as critical to providing revenue and quality management at exceptional and heavily visited state parks.

In 2001, the Department conducted a study to determine Hawai'i's willingness to support increased funding for watershed protection. Respondents were presented with various means by which the increased funds could be raised (general funds, taxes, or fees). A majority supported the use of environment-related taxes (7.4 out of 10), or a visitor-related tax (8.0 out of 10). Palau adds a green fee to all airline passengers leaving the island state and adds the funds to an environmental management fund. Palau, New Zealand, and Maldives have not experienced a decline in visitors due to their green fees.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of this measure.



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SCOTT J. GLENN
INTERIM DIRECTOR

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Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii'i 96804

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Statement of
SCOTT GLENN, Interim Director

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 3:00PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

in consideration of
SB 304, SD 2, HD 2
RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES.

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports the intent** of SB 304, SD2, HD 2 which effective 7/1/2025, establishes the visitor impact fee program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources, through which the department will collect a fee from visitors for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. Establishes the visitor impact fee special fund effective 7/1/2023. Requires report to the legislature on strategic plan and timetable for objectives and implementation of the visitor impact fee program. Appropriates funds for the visitor impact fee strategic plan and positions for the visitor impact fee program.

The OPSD has partnered with the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and the Department of Land and Natural Resources on destination management and sustainable tourism policies. The OPSD supports site-specific user fees as the preferred model and supports the reinvestment of those collections into improving the experience for kama'āina and visitors alike at public parks and trails.

This legislation is in alignment with the recommendations of the State of Hawai'i's decennial climate and sustainability strategic action plan—the [Hawai'i 2050 Sustainability Plan: Charting a Course for the Decade of Action \(2020-2030\)](#). Specifically, reducing the environmental footprint of the tourism industry is a major strategy to promote a sustainable economic recovery for the State of Hawai'i.

1. “Launch a collaborative tourism-based environmentally-sustainability program with natural resource partners to mitigate visitor impacts and support responsible tourism initiatives.” (Recommended Action #57, Page 99)
2. “Enable Hawai'i tourism to contribute to the regeneration of Hawai'i's natural beauty, resources, and unique culture.” (Recommended Action #62, Page 99)

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide these comments.



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION
COMMISSION
POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Co-Chairs:
Chair, DLNR
Director, OPSD

Commissioners:
Chair, Senate AEN
Chair, Senate WTL
Chair, House EEP
Chair, House WAL
Chairperson, HTA
Chairperson, DOA
CEO, OHA
Chairperson, DHHL
Director, DBEDT
Director, DOT
Director, DOH
Chairperson, DOE
Director, C+C DPP
Director, Maui DP
Director, Hawai'i DP
Director, Kaua'i DP
The Adjutant General
Manager, CZM

**Testimony of
Leah Laramée
Coordinator, Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission**

**Before the House Committee on
FINANCE**

**Wednesday, March 29, 2023
3:00 PM**

State Capitol, Conference Room 308, Via Videoconference

**In consideration of
SENATE BILL 304, SENATE DRAFT 2, HOUSE DRAFT 2
RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES**

Senate Bill 304, Senate Draft 2, House Draft 2 establishes the visitor impact fee program within the department of land and natural resources, through which the department will collect a fee from visitors for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. Establishes the visitor impact fee special fund effective 7/1/2023. Requires report to the legislature on strategic plan and timetable for objectives and implementation of the visitor impact fee program. Appropriates funds for the visitor impact fee strategic plan and positions for the visitor impact fee program. **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure.**

The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission consists of a multi-jurisdictional effort between 20 different departments, committees, and counties. The green fee is an important mechanism which will fund the expansion of conservation actions across the state that would greatly increase the resilience of natural lands which are key to economic, food, water, health and climate resiliency. Natural lands such as forests, watersheds and our reefs are vital for the state to reach our climate and food security goals. Hawai'i's forests are our only carbon sink. Half of Hawaii's forests have already been lost. If we are to be carbon net negative by 2045 as mandated by Act 15 (2018) we will need to protect our existing forests to protect the carbon stored in them and expand the forest footprint to capture additional carbon.

Our native forests are also needed for water security. Impacts of climate change such as droughts and rain bombs are already occurring. Without vegetation and forest cover, most of our islands' rainfall would quickly run off unused into the ocean. Instead, the forest buffers the impact of heavy rains. Even without rain, Hawaii's native forests can absorb moisture from passing clouds that condense on the thick vegetation. Intercepting cloud drip increases water capture by as much as 30% of rainfall, and increases groundwater re-supply by 10-15%.

Coral reefs provide habitat for our nearshore fisheries, protect coasts from waves and storms, and support tourism and fishing industries worth billions of dollars. Coral reefs are also fundamental to the fabric of local communities, providing a source of food, materials and traditional activities. In a recent report by USGS, Hawaii's coral reefs were valued at \$863 million per year.

Wetlands help purify our water. During major rain events that due to climate change are expected to increase in frequency and intensity, a wetland can trap and allow pollutants and toxins to settle before they reach the ocean. In the same way they can help us control sediment and store flood water. Wetland habitats that also absorb carbon and can act as buffers to sea level rise.

Historically natural lands have been underinvested in. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2022 report highlights the importance of nature as a climate solution. Three of the five most effective strategies for mitigating carbon emissions are all natural climate solutions. The enactment of the green fee would be a game changer for the state, not only for our natural and cultural environment but for the survival of the people of Hawai'i.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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[Josh Green, M.D.](#)
Governor

[John De Fries](#)
President and Chief Executive Officer

Statement of
JOHN DE FRIES
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Wednesday, March 29, 2023
3:00 p.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL NO. 304 SD2 HD2
RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee on Finance,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments in support of the intent of SB304 SD2 HD2, to collect fees to fund the protection and increased resilience of Hawai'i's natural and outdoor recreational resources.

The ethic of mālama – care and stewardship – is the core of our visitor education efforts. HTA's work is framed by four interacting strategic pillars: Natural Resources, Hawaiian Culture, Community, and Branding – the last of which is dependent upon the strength of the first three.

Hawai'i's environment is a treasure, and it is our collective kuleana to protect it for the generations to come. Fulfilling that responsibility takes funding. We agree with the intent of this legislation as it is in alignment with our Strategic Plan priorities in the Natural Resources pillar, as well as action items in our community-generated Destination Management Action Plans.

We have consistently been supportive of site-specific user fees as our preferred model, and no matter the model of collection, we advocate the reinvestment of those collections into improving the experience for kama'āina and visitors alike at public parks and trails.

We support the intent of SB304 SD2 HD2. We stand ready to assist in educating visitor industry stakeholders and visitors, and we defer to our colleagues at the Department of Land and Natural Resources on matters related to the implementation of this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide these comments.



March 27, 2023

Kyle Yamashita, Chair
Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
House Committee on Finance
Hawaii State Legislature

Comments on SB304 SD2 HD2

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the House Finance Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB304 SD2 HD2.

Overall, the Kohala Coast Resort Association supports visitors paying their fair share for use of our state's natural resources, including state parks, beaches, trails, natural areas and other facilities, but only if those fees are directly reinvested in those natural areas for maintenance, upkeep and preservation. Unfortunately, that is not currently happening with other visitor fee programs being managed by the Department of Land and Natural Resources.

Fees of \$10 per car and \$5 per person have been collected at a number of Hawaii Island state parks for years. For example, Hapuna Beach State Park on the Kohala Coast has collected more than \$1.5 million in fees from visitors, but those fees have not been reinvested in that resource. In fact the opposite has been true. Hapuna Beach State Park has been plagued by issues with its water lines for more than a year. Spray painted signs on broken wooden boards state "NO WATER" as you enter the park. And, despite repeated requests from the industry, the community, and elected officials, there is currently no potable water, nor working restroom facilities. The temporary luas that have been put in place have been there for more than 6 months and are not cleaned often enough. They bake in the sun and are an unsightly and odorous detraction from what should be one of Hawaii Island's crown jewels. We understand from recent media coverage that the state will take more than two years to come up with a permanent solution. This is unacceptable!

We believe that the Hawaii State Legislature should take a deeper dive into the revenues and expenditures from previously established visitor fee programs before moving this bill forward and committing to new ones. A dashboard on how all of the fees are being used should also be readily available and accessible to the public, so we can be apprised of the status of key projects. It is often difficult to receive an update, or even a return phone call from state departments and divisions.

In addition, the Kohala Coast Resort Association would like to see the Legislature provide a firm accounting on how revenues collected from visitors through other taxes, such as the Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) are allocated across state services. We believe the \$40 million that our members paid into state and county TAT in 2022 should be appropriately allocated to address visitor impacts, not just disappear into the general fund.

On behalf our 5,000 employees and their 20,000 family members, thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB304 SD2 HD2.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephanie P. Donoho". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephanie Donoho, Administrative Director



TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND'S TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 304 SD2 HD 2
House Committee on Finance, Conf. Rm. 308
Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 3:00 p.m.

HAWAII
 1164 Bishop St., Ste. 1512
 Honolulu, HI 96813
tpl.org

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice-Chair Kitagawa, and Committee Members –

Trust for Public Land (TPL) strongly supports SB 304 SD2 HD 2, which proposes to establish a visitor impact fee or fund, the revenues of which would be used to care for our precious natural and cultural resources impacted by tourism.

Although Hawai'i's natural and host culture attracts over 10 million visitors a year in non-pandemic times, the State's management and protection of cultural and natural resources is sorely underfunded -- receiving less than 1% of the state's annual budget. DLNR struggles to manage a tremendous kuleana – its Natural Area Reserves, Forest Reserves, parks, trails, historic sites and monuments, and unencumbered state land. Hawai'i suffers from a significant conservation funding gap [estimated at \\$360 million annually](#). Meanwhile – coral reefs are dying, trails are overcrowded, cultural sites are being damaged, parks are deteriorating, watersheds are threatened, and fish stocks are declining. Residents feel overwhelmed by the overuse of and damage to the special places they and their families once enjoyed, and to which many families have genealogical connections.

With an estimated 10 million tourists visiting our islands annually in non-pandemic times, a \$50 per person green fee could generate \$500 million in conservation revenue each year, creating local green jobs and protecting Hawai'i's irreplaceable natural and cultural resources, including the forested watersheds that generate the islands' only source of fresh drinking water and the reefs that protect more than \$830 million worth of coastal infrastructure each year, according to a [USGS report](#).

Voters strongly support management of our natural and cultural resources funded by a visitor impact fee. A January 2023 survey conducted by FM3 (95% confidence level), found that nearly two-thirds of Hawai'i voters support the Legislature passing a \$50 visitor impact fee that would be used to maintain and manage natural and cultural resources. Our broader community has experienced first-hand the impacts of tourism on Hawai'i and agree across gender, political party, and ethnicity that a visitor impact fee is in the best interest of Hawai'i. We hope that you agree.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify. I apologize that I will not be able to attend the hearing in person or virtually due to a scheduling conflict.

Lea Hong
 Associate Vice-President
 Hawai'i State Director
 Edmund C. Olson Trust Fellow
 Trust for Public Land

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 Lendlease Americas

Tom Reeve
 Conservationist

Ka'iulani Sodaro
 Ward Village/Howard Hughes

Jan Sullivan
 Oceanit



**Coalition Letter in Support of Hawai'i Green Fee
Committee on Finance
Support of SB304
March 27, 2023**

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

The coalition of organizations and small businesses listed below are writing in **strong support of SB304 with comments**, which would establish a visitor green program for Hawai'i with the following key elements: (1) Charge visitors a \$50 environmental license for the use of state-owned natural and cultural resources, (2) include a significant allocation toward nonprofit and local government implementing partners, and (3) includes a level of expertise and industry leader knowledge to guide the use of funds annual to maximize impact. These three elements will support a robust and effective program that fosters community and cross-sector support.

Our support for SB304 is contingent upon green fee resources being distributed across Hawai'i to support implementation partners and protect our coastlines, reefs, forests, and watersheds throughout our home. This coalition, which works on the frontlines of natural and cultural resource management across the State, applauds the leadership of this committee and introducers of this bill, and urges leadership to consider the crucial need for sustainable, broad-based funding to meet the immense challenges our environment faces, and offset the significant impact left by nearly 10 million visitors every single year. For example, a recent study confirmed that Hawai'i coral reefs attract visitors which then exacerbate their degradation. These resources are invaluable to the livelihoods of our local residents and integral drivers of our statewide economy as well as our visitor industry.

Recent poll results reveal 89% of voters believe we must increase investment in our land, water, wildlife, and natural resources. Hawai'i's total conservation funding gap has been estimated at \$360 million annually. This underinvestment is a liability to future generations and our way of life. With an estimated 10 million visitors annually, a \$50 per visitor green fee could generate \$500 million in conservation revenue each year. A visitor impact fee program presents an opportunity to finance the protection and restoration of these irreplaceable natural and cultural resources, create hundreds of jobs for local residents, meet the local needs of our home, and secure a healthy environment for future generations.

The following green fee priorities will help our State offset visitor impact: supporting broad funding of our natural and cultural resources, uplifting community groups to implement solutions to offset visitor impacts, and increasing the health and resilience of places trafficked by residents and visitors.



These organizations and businesses support taking care of our environment through a visitor green fee so it can continue to nourish and care for us and future generations:

1. Conservation International
2. Kanu Hawai'i
3. Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (KUA)
4. Kupu
5. Surfrider Foundation Hawai'i
6. The Nature Conservancy
7. Hawai'i Alliance for Community-Based Economic Development (HACBED)
8. Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i
9. Blue Planet Foundation
10. Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition
11. Hawai'i Forest & Trail
12. Trust for Public Land
13. Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA)
14. Hawai'i Youth Climate Coalition
15. Wastewater Alternatives & Innovations (WAI)
16. National Tropical Botanical Garden
17. Young Progressives Demanding Action
18. The Conservationist Collective
19. Pono Hawai'i Initiative
20. Wild Kids
21. Parley for the Oceans
22. Reuse Hawai'i
23. Resources Legacy Fund
24. Malama Pupukeya-Waimea
25. Hawai'i Land Trust
26. Mālama Learning Center
27. Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project
28. Kuleana Coral Restoration
29. Zero Waste Hawai'i Island
30. Travel2Change
31. Mālama Maunalua



32. Kailua Beach Adventures
33. Good Food Movement
34. Care About Climate
35. Protea Zero Waste Store
36. Kailua Beach Adventures
37. Agripelago
38. Native Ecosystem Services
39. Delphi Cinema
40. Keep it Simple Honolulu
41. North Shore Community Land Trust
42. Hawai'i Wildlife Fund
43. Kingdom Pathways
44. Kokonut Koalition
45. Excurinsure
46. Kokua Foundation

Mahalo for your commitment to protecting Hawai'i's priceless natural assets, and please reach out with any questions at aloha@hawaii-greenfee.org.

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 2:08:36 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kawika Winter	Heʻeia National Estuarine Research Reserve	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Finance Committee,

This past Sunday, I --along with a fellow marine biologist, Mark Hixon-- co-authored [an OpEd in the Star-Advertiser](#) that articulated our belief in the need for a green fee in Hawai`i. As we stated therein, a green fee would provide the funding necessary to protect and restore our coral reefs and other environments that are adversely impacted by tourism. I urge you to support this bill.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Dr. Kawika Winter

Director, He`eia National Estuarine Research Reserve

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 305

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS, Visitor Impact Fee

BILL NUMBER: SB 304 HD 2

INTRODUCED BY: House Committee on Tourism

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes the Visitor Impact Fee Program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), through which the department will collect a fee for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. Establishes, and appropriates moneys into and out of, the Visitor Impact Fee Special Fund.

SYNOPSIS: Adds a new part to chapter 171, HRS, to define the program.

Under the program, visitors shall pay a visitor impact fee to obtain a license to use a state park, beach, state-owned forest, hiking trail on state-owned land, or other state-owned natural area. Visitor impact fees collected shall be deposited in the newly established visitor impact fee special fund. Revenues collected under the program shall be allocated to protect, restore, and manage natural and cultural resources.

Prohibits any visitor who is fifteen years of age or older to visit a state park, beach, state-owned forest, hiking trail on state-owned land, or other state-owned natural area without first obtaining an impact fee license. Violators shall be liable for a civil fine not to exceed \$___, but fines shall not begin until five years after the establishment of the program.

The initial visitor impact fee shall be \$50 per person and the license purchased shall be good for one year. DLNR may, once every five years, adjust the fee to account for inflation.

DLNR is to place signs at state parks, beaches, state-owned forests, trailheads on state-owned land, and other state-owned natural areas to inform visitors of the requirement to pay a visitor impact fee and obtain a license.

DLNR's disbursement of impact fee revenues out of the special fund may be used for one or more of the following purposes:

- (a) Direct expenses expended directly by state agencies for projects that help offset adverse environmental impacts caused by visitors, ensure that the State's natural resources are maintained for continued use by licensees, or both.
- (b) Expenses for the administration of the program, including the creation and implementation of a visitor impact fee strategic plan.
- (c) Grants to the counties or nonprofit organizations up to 50% of the annual fee revenue. Priority will be given to projects that satisfy at least one of the following:
 - (1) Develop nature-based solutions to environmental and climate issues that impact the State;

- (2) Provide significant protection, restoration, and enhancement of Hawaii's natural resources; or
- (3) Increase the resilience of state-owned natural resources trafficked by licensees.
- (d) Cost-matching funds for federal grants that satisfy at least one of (c)(1)-(3).
- (e) Enforcement of the impact fee license law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 30, 3000.

STAFF COMMENTS: This fee may be subject to challenge as unconstitutional. The Privileges and Immunities Clause of the U.S. Constitution requires that “The Citizens of each State shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States.” Although it has been held that a state may treat out-of-state residents differently in some situations, such as in granting licenses for recreational hunting, *Baldwin v. Fish & Game Commission of Montana*, 436 U.S. 371 (1978), the Court indicated that the result may be different when the nonresident is not given access to any part of the State to which they may seek to travel. *Id.* at 388. This is because the Court has recognized that the Constitution protects the right of citizens of the United States to travel freely throughout the land.

“We are all citizens of the United States,” the Court stated in *Crandall v. Nevada*, 75 U.S. 35 (1867), “and as members of the same community must have the right to pass and repass through every part of it without interruption, as freely as in our own states. And a tax imposed by a state for entering its territories or harbors is inconsistent with the rights which belong to citizens of other states as members of the Union and with the objects which that Union was intended to attain. Such a power in the states could produce nothing but discord and mutual irritation, and they very clearly do not possess it.”

Other recent cases in the federal system have sustained the power of government to charge a user fee whose proceeds are dedicated to protect and preserve the natural attraction for which the user fee was charged (Hanauma Bay, for example). The cases did not see as problematic exempting Hawaii taxpayers from the fee.

The Hawaii Supreme Court in *State v. Medeiros*, 89 Haw. 361, 973 P.2d 736 (1999), held that the following test would be applied to distinguish between a user fee and a tax: “whether the charge (1) applies to the direct beneficiary of a particular service, (2) is allocated directly to defraying the costs of providing the service, and (3) is reasonably proportionate to the benefit received.” 89 Haw. at 367, 973 P.2d at 742.

Applying this test, the proposed visitor impact fee looks more like a tax. Although the impact fee is collected in a special fund, it is collected from visitors regardless of how many natural attractions the visitor visits. The uses to which the money in the fund can be put are broad and varied, and are not limited to the care and upkeep of natural attractions visited by tourists.

For these reasons we are concerned that the State is without power to limit access of visitors to places where residents are allowed.

We also note some incongruities in the definition of “resident” offered in the bill. The bill calls a person a resident if that person filed a Hawaii tax return; nonresidents file Hawaii tax returns too.

Re: SB 304 HD2

Page 3

The bill also allows a person to be classified as a resident if they have a utility bill or similar document showing a Hawaii address; the Hawaii address could be that of a second or third home.

Digested: 3/27/2023

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 3:34:10 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlie Quesnel	Surfrider Foundation, Maui Chapter	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Charlie Quesnel and I am also a longtime EC member to the Surfrider Maui as their treasurer and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State. as I mentioned my name is Charlie, I have been resident and homeowner to Maui since 1968, and I love my island. There's no where else my wife and I want also. But I also know it's fragile Island, and we need to do everything possible to maintain its fragile beauty. And this bill would help in this way by making our visitors create a vested interest in our Beautiful place by "paying their way" to come visit our islands. And so I greatly support this bill because of what can represent to the aina and our people.

As a region, we face surmounting environmental challenges like disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

Recent public polling has found that 89% of Hawai'i voters agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 would do that for our environment. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

So again I just ask that you help with supporting this through the state legislator. It's important and means a lot to ultimately helping preserve our fragile environment for future and our children's future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Charlie Quesnel

HUI MAKA'ĀINANA O MAKANA



The Hui Maka'āinana o Makana is a non-profit organization dedicated to perpetuating and teaching the skills, knowledge, and practices of our kūpuna (ancestors) through the interpretation, restoration, care, and protection of natural and cultural resources in within the Hā'ena State Park.

March 27, 2023

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, March 29, 2023

TIME: 3:00 PM

Subject: Testimony in Strong Support of SB304 SD2 HD2

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the Committee on Finance:

My name is Chipper Wichman and I am a resident of Hā'ena, Kaua'i, and have been involved in conservation of natural and cultural resources for almost 50 years. I am a founding Director of the Hui Maka'āinana o Makana (1998) and just retired as the President of the National Tropical Botanical Garden (headquartered in Kalāheo, Kaua'i) after working there 47 years.

I am testifying in strong support of SB 304 SD2 HD2 which would help offset visitor impacts through the establishment of a visitor green fee program. I have long advocated for establishing a green fee to help protect Hawaii's unique resources from the huge number of visitors that come to our islands.

They come to enjoy the unique culture of the islands and the extraordinary natural beauty and environment – but these very attributes of Hawai'i that bring visitors here year after year are being loved to death – it's time to give our visitors a chance to give back and be part of protecting Hawaii through establishing this modest Green Fee.

After years of discussing this concept, the time has come for our political leaders to act decisively put in place a new funding stream that will help protect our islands and our communities as well as assist our State mitigate climate change impacts and become more resilient. Today is the last hearing on this bill and over the course of the past two months it has received strong support from both DLNR as well as the public and the visitor industry.

In Hā'ena we have been able to implement true regenerative tourism through our partnership with State Parks and the visitors are excited to know that their money is being used to help take care of our 'āina and our community. I am sure that the vast majority of visitors paying a green fee when they enter our State will feel the same way.

SD 304 SD2 HD2 has the ability to replicate the success we have had in Hā'ena at a State-wide scale and address the funding gaps we currently are experiencing. We need you to support this bill so that it will: 1) provide broad funding for many relevant projects, 2) be distributed to community organizations working in these sectors, 3) created efficient oversight, and 4) fund high-priority projects that span from ridge to reef like our coastlines, forests, coral reefs, and endangered species!!!

Time is running out and we need to make serious investments now to protect our communities, and preserve our ecological and cultural resources for future generations – the visitor “green fee” envisioned in SD 304 SD2 HD2 is logical and will begin to address these urgent challenges!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chipper Wichman", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Chipper Wichman, Board Secretary
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana



**Testimony in Support of SB304
House Committee on Water and Land**

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Janet Mayfield and I am the CEO and Director for National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG). **I am testifying in strong support of SB304, which would establish a green fee program.** At NTBG we are committed to the perpetuation of Hawai'i's irreplaceable plants. Native plants are at the very foundation of our ecosystems, the livelihoods of our communities, and the lifeblood of culture. But they are under immense threat. Already drastically reduced across the pae 'āina, every pressure increases the chance that these plants will disappear forever. The lives of future generations depend on our collective efforts to reverse the tide for Hawai'i's cherished plant species.

While the visitor industry is a major component of our economy, bolstering our own nonprofit's revenue stream to support conservation, visitation can significantly impact the health and wellbeing of native plant populations, and ultimately, entire ecosystems. **As visitation increases in Hawai'i, so do the risks: the potential for more invasive species introduced, the spreading of pathogens like Rapid 'Ōhi'a Death, drastic erosion in our wildlands, increased plant poaching, and more. That is why we believe in a visitor green fee, one that would scale needed conservation resources with visitation.**

On the frontlines, we know first-hand how expensive and challenging conservation is. Because of our dedication and expertise, we also know how to make the most of limited resources. **Funding provided by a visitor green fee to organizations like ours would critically power conservation efforts across Hawai'i.**

The visitor industry can transform. Visitors can learn to mālama Hawai'i and be part of the solution for our imperiled ecosystems. That is a message we instill with visitors at our botanic gardens on Kaua'i and Maui. A visitor green fee is a pivotal part of this transformation. Rather than a penalty, it is an invitation to care for the intertwined natural and cultural resources that sustain us.

We urge the committee to pass a visitor green fee program this session to grow a brighter tomorrow for Hawai'i's ecosystems and communities.

Sincerely,

Janet Mayfield,
CEO and Director

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 6:07:54 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Cilfone	Kohola Film Project	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

It is long passed due that the state of Hawai'i charges a conservation fee to it's visitors. Working to protect Maui's coastal region for the last 11 years, I've seen nothing but disrespect and entitlement from 98% of its visitors. People pay thousands of dollars to the airlines, rental car companies, and hotel corporations and think they deserve to do whatever they want to this place. Coral destruction, animal harassment, chemical pollution, trespassing on ecological reserves, and drawing water from the people that live here to fill hotel pools and water golf courses are just a few crimes against the environment that I've witness on a daily basis. A 50 dollar fee is not nearly enough to right us from this destructive path we're on but it's certainly a step in the right direction. PAS THE GREEN FEE!



Testimony Before The
House Committee on Finance
IN SUPPORT OF SB 304 SD2 HD2 Proposed
March 29, 2023, 3:00PM, Room 308

My name is Kevin Chang and I am the Executive Director of Kua'āina Ulu 'Auamo (or KUA). KUA works to empower grassroots rural and Native Hawaiian mālama 'āina groups -fishers, farmers, families- to celebrate their places and pass on their traditions to better Hawai'i and achieve 'āina momona— an abundant, productive ecological system that supports community well-being.

KUA employs a community-driven approach that currently supports a statewide network of 36 mālama 'āina community groups collectively referred to as E Alu Pū (moving forward together), 40 fishpond projects and practitioners called the Hui Mālama Loko I'a, and a growing group of over 60 Limu practitioners and supporters called the Limu Hui. Our vision of 'āina momona includes pathways to new economic and environmental regenerative opportunities for present and future generations.

KUA strongly supports the proposed SB 304 SD2 HD2 with suggestions as an incremental step on a pathway towards 'āina momona. This bill proposes an environmental license for tourists which would allocate moneys to natural resource management, establish a fund and commission to direct use of the fees collected transparently, and support our government and our community through grant programs to non-profits working to protect and restore Hawai'i's natural resources. We view the commission as significant in helping DLNR build capacity in its outreach and connection to uplifting communities through a culture of conservation. We suggest in the development of this bill that defines project priorities, as set forth in section 171-f (b) and (d) specifically include a fourth priority for initiatives that further public trust responsibilities to the Native Hawaiian community in regards to the perpetuation of their culture and relationship with the environment. For example:

'Allocate funding directly to or in grants to Native Hawaiian community stewardship projects that:

(a) Help implement projects that help offset adverse visitor impacts to Native Hawaiian natural or cultural resources; or

(b) Help offset adverse visitor impacts to Native Hawaiian natural or cultural resources."

Further we suggest the operative language regarding the dispersal of these funds to community non-profits in 171-f (d) should be changed to "shall allocate moneys to provide grants" to ensure that our citizens, who live in and are most knowledgeable and subject to the environmental impacts of tourism are considered and resourced as part and parcel to the solutions they provide as partners in environmental governance and management.

A recent survey on public support for the care of biocultural resources found that **95% of Hawai'i voters believe it is our kuleana to care for the ocean for future generations and 82% percent also support giving local communities a clear role in managing marine areas. Further 89% agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources.** We believe SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them.

The preamble of this bill also uplifts the significance of the contribution that many state citizens, especially those in rural and Native Hawaiian communities across our state do beyond the payment of taxes for environmental care. They engage in practices of direct environmental management and governance often in collaboration with our too long under-resourced DLNR. They engage in this work as a matter of kuleana, subsistence and civic responsibility driven by values and practices embodied in our constitution. It is appropriate that this resource pathway should specifically support and empower community capacity as an essential partner in environmental governance and management.

A primary function of KUA includes development of an 'auwai, a stream of resources, tools, bridges, relationships, and networks that help to cultivate and take our communities' work to greater levels of collective impact. A core catalyst for the flow in this 'auwai includes increasing the percentage of our economy -public and private- which helps manage and regenerate the condition of the environment that sustain us. Indeed, understanding growth in an environmental sector is becoming a priority as well as the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization, with input from KUA and a number of partners (DLNR, Kupu, TNC, KS, OHA etc.) now tracks natural resource workforce development as a key part of a "Green Economy."

Our young people today are calling for a rebalanced approach to living in an island subject to an overly extractive economic approach to life. They want a sector of our economy which rebalances overuse with better care and stops our perpetual state deferred environmental maintenance. They want an island culture that no longer takes for granted the environmental subsidies that allows us to thrive. Indeed, island communities which draw tourists from around the world are the canaries in the coal mine for being overrun with travelers and impacts by global climate change. This is why the preamble of the bill cites island communities like Galapagos, New Zealand and Palau as leaders in developing green fee programs. Hawai'i must join this hui.

Looking to the future, our communities are raising the kupa'āina who want jobs focused on mālama 'āina. Young people want to stay home and care for their home. In the conservation sector young people are calling for more conservation opportunities with livable wages. The overrun on applications that recently inundated and exceeded the capacity of the DOCARE Academy enrollment portal is a strong indicator. This despite the fact that they will still likely be underpaid. We appreciate the necessary, creative and collaborative approaches our state supports that build the capacity and skills of the next generation with intention, and in a way that benefits ongoing community efforts to support ecosystem regeneration.

The communities we work with are committed to ensuring the long-term health of our biocultural resources. They have depended on them for generations. We believe our environment, the foundation of our very existence, is about long-term investment and a vision of 'āina momona. To get there it requires among other things taking the steps toward greater self-

sufficiency, development of a pipeline of new and more innovative career pathways, mindsets, relationships and resource flows for mālama 'āina. Passing this bill out of your committee will open an essential 'auwai toward reaching this vision.

Please pass this bill out of your committee and mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

Aloha 'Āina Momona.

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 9:18:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
laurel brier	Kauai Women's Caucus	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Let's build visitor stewardship, conserve our cultural and natural resources, and invest in our 'āina with a visitor green fee. And please guarantee that all collected fees go into a special fund that is used specifically for environmental protection and to help mitigate the climate crisis

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 1:17:31 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex Wong	Kauai Farm Planning	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Representatives on the Finance Committee,

Mahalo for all your effort and thorough work on drafting this bill. The attempt to capture revenue to offset the costly environmental and financial impacts caused by the negative externalities of tourism and visitors on Hawaii’s natural resources is long overdue.

Please make Hawaii’s TOURISTS subsidize HEALTHCARE for Hawaii’s FARMERS. Please utilize the Hawaii Visitor Green Fee to address the worsening state of Hawaii’s agricultural economy, the struggling mental and physical health of Hawaii’s farmers, and the fact that Hawaii is dependent on importing 80-90% of its food.

Although the Visitor Green Fee does address restitution to the environment for the negative impact tourism has on Hawaii’s natural resources, it does NOT address restitution towards Native Hawaiians and Hawaii residents who also suffer from the damages caused by the negative impacts of tourism on the quality of Life in Hawaii. This is a SOCIAL EQUITY issue. Residents in Hawaii must pay the high Cost of Living in Hawaii every day of the year, costs that are often exacerbated by the influx of international and Mainland tourists who have no familial or ancestral connection to Hawaii. Tourists and visitors who ultimately inflate the rental and housing markets, and energy/electricity, sewer, and potable water demands. Tourists and visitors who have no intention of assimilating to the Hawaiian lifestyle and culture and participating in the traditionally “local” family-oriented island economy while they are here.

On top of all that, tourists and visitors come to Hawaii from the Mainland and eat food imported from the Mainland! How ridiculous is that? Tourists are a huge demographic consuming a significant percentage of the 80-90% of all of Hawaii’s food that is imported. The money all these tourists spend on imported food during their stay ultimately LEAVES Hawaii. As long as this continues, Hawaii’s Tourism Industry and the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) will continue to fail at supporting Hawaii’s Agricultural Industry, essentially squandering a golden opportunity to fuel a mutually beneficial relationship maximizing the economic potential between two compatible industries.

The food (whether imported or locally grown) that the tourists buy and consume while in Hawaii is the nexus between the Visitor Green Fee and Hawaii’s agriculture industry.

Farming in Hawaii is difficult, physical work. The start-up costs for setting up a farm operation are more expensive than on the Mainland, and the ROI is slow and minimal for the amount of money, energy, and time expended. And yet, this is much more than just a food security issue for the people of Hawaii. This is a nutritional health issue, a cultural and ethnic oppression issue, a socioeconomic issue for the urban and rural communities that technically qualify as "food deserts" and do not have access to fresh healthy foods. This is a SOCIAL EQUITY issue. This is a resiliency and emergency management issue, especially in light of worsening climate change, natural disasters, and international conflicts.

The continued dependence on imported food, perpetuates the continued loss of Hawaii's consumers' dollars to the Mainland, Mexico and Central and South America where the imported food originates. Nearly ALL of that money spent on imported food LEAVES Hawaii. The residents do not benefit, and the State does not benefit in relative comparison to the major cons associated with the vulnerability and instability of this existing market structure that tentatively feeds the State of Hawaii each passing year.

In order to significantly increase the quantity of locally grown agricultural produce and products sold in Hawaii, and lower the steep 80-90% imported food statistic, Hawaii needs more residents farming at a higher capacity and scale, continuously, year around. This will require more residents to leave their part time and full time jobs, with healthcare insurance benefits, to not only farm more hours of the day/week/month, but also take on the additional risk of either going without coverage OR minimizing their monthly income to less than \$2,000 per month to qualify for MedQuest. In a state where rent is routinely greater than \$2,000 per month, qualified MedQuest recipients are pigeonholed in poverty, until they can figure out how to generate enough monthly income to pay for insurance plans out of pocket.

To make matters even more dismal, the results from the recent University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) Seeds Of Wellbeing survey of Hawaii's agricultural producers (n=408) nearly 35% of the respondents, 1 out of 3, reported experiencing symptoms of depression. Over 50 of the respondents under the age of <45 years old reported symptoms of depression. And over 8% of the respondents reported having thoughts of suicide. At this rate, who wants to farm?

<https://manoa.hawaii.edu/sow-well/media/publications/>

If the State of Hawaii truly cares about food security, import substitution, and resiliency, then it must do better at supporting Hawaii's farmers and their financial bottom line. If the State of Hawaii genuinely cares about the future of Hawaii's agricultural industry and economic viability outside of tourism (a non-essential industry proven by COVID), then it must take better care of Hawaii's farmers and their families. NOTHING CHANGES IF NOTHING CHANGES.

The very least that the State of Hawaii can do for supporting Hawaii's agriculture industry, the bare minimum, is to provide comprehensive healthcare benefits for Hawaii's farmers and their children. By providing quality comprehensive healthcare coverage, the

State of Hawaii will see more young, able-bodied residents making the transition away from their full time 9-to-5 jobs towards a more traditional Hawaiian lifestyle that enables farming at a greater scale and capacity. For many young farmers, the State subsidized healthcare for farmers will alleviate a huge financial stressor and the latent stressors associated with the fear of working in an accident-prone industry while being uninsured. MedQuest for farmers will also be a real incentive for many young residents to give farming a try. The insurance coverage will afford many young residents the opportunity to minimize the risk and try farming at least once in their career.

Raise the \$2,000 per month income cap on MedQuest for Hawaii's farmers. Give farmers an opportunity to be insured and not be pigeonholed in poverty. Make the Visitor Green Fee \$75 per visitor, and earmark \$25 of every Visitor Green Fee to be allocated toward providing comprehensive healthcare (i.e. MedQuest) including Medical, Dental, Pharmacy, and Vision for all Hawaii residents who are actively farming commercially and/or for subsistence.

Tourism in Hawaii has been built on the backs of Hawaiians and locals since the beginning. Now it is time to rebuild Hawaiian agriculture on the back of the BILLION dollar tourism industry! This is SOCIAL EQUITY for the people of Hawaii.

Tourism in Hawaii is a multi BILLION dollar industry, and yet where can the State of Hawaii legally and effectively begin to levy the funds (via fees) from the Tourists? Which choke points can the State of Hawaii effectively capture and enforce the mandatory Visitor Green Fee?

- 1. The HDOT-Airports will coordinate with the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), and the Airlines, and will be responsible for the distribution, completion, and collection of visitor statistics and Visitor Green Fees from applicable (Non-Hawaii Resident) airline passengers. The process can be similar to the existing Agricultural Plant and Animal Declaration form. Passengers with current valid State of Hawaii Identification Cards or Drivers Licenses will be exempt from being charged the Visitor Green Fee.**
- 2. Require by law, all car rental companies operating in the State of Hawaii to validate the visitor's/tourist's confirmation number from their Visitor Green Fee receipt upon check-in.**
- 3. Require by law, all legal and registered Transient Vacation Rentals (Air Bnb, VRBO, etc.), Bed & Breakfasts, Resorts, Hotels, Motels, Timeshares, etc. to validate the visitor's/tourist's confirmation number from their Visitor Green Fee receipt upon check-in.**
- 4. Require by law, participating State of Hawaii parks, beaches, and hiking trails to validate the visitor's/tourist's confirmation number from their Visitor Green Fee receipt upon check-in.**

Please do the right thing and support local agriculture by providing healthcare coverage for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of our local farmers through the Hawaii

Visitor Green Fee. The future of our culture depends on our ability to get the next generation farming again.

Mahalo nui loa,

**Alex Wong
Kauai Farm Planning**

Testimony in Support of SB304
House Committee on Finance

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Perry (Penelope) Dye, and I am 15 years old. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB304.

The visitor industry is a complicated and nuanced issue in Hawaii. On one hand, tourism supports our economy and allows many residents of our islands to prosper. People from around the world are able to experience the beauty of Hawaii's natural resources in our beaches, reefs, forests, mountains, indigenous species, and culture. But on the other hand, the visitor industry is immeasurably detrimental to Hawaii's environment and native cultures. Visitors who aren't raised with the same degree of respect for the environment as locals often receive little to no education on the proper etiquette to use when in natural spaces, causing great destruction to Hawaii's natural environment. Native Hawaiian cultural practices are appropriated and commercialized for profit, and few visitors leave the islands with a genuine understanding of Hawaii and her peoples. **I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.**

I firmly believe that the visitor impact fee proposed in SB304 is a vital step towards remedying many of the problems surrounding the visitor industry in Hawaii. This fee would require visitors to give back to our islands in exchange for the benefits they are receiving from visiting our beautiful natural spaces. As residents, we try to do our fair share for our islands, whether that is through paying taxes, working in the community, stewarding the environment, or preserving Native Hawaiian traditions and histories. The visitor impact fee would only be asking visitors to do the same, to pay their small part and allow us to care for our islands so that they can be enjoyed for generations to come. Additionally, I believe that the visitor impact fee will prompt many visitors to think more deeply and critically about how they are affecting our islands, which could encourage them to engage in other beneficial activities besides the fee's financial contribution, such as volunteer or cultural preservation work. The visitor impact fee special fund that the bill proposes would provide great benefits for environmental adaptation in Hawaii, providing a dedicated pool of money to be used for the often underfunded but vital programs and actions focused on protecting the environment.

I have been raised in these islands, reaping the benefits of our beautiful home. I acknowledge how incredibly fortunate I am to have grown up in Honolulu, in a safe house in a beautiful land. I try my best to repay the debt I owe these islands, though advocating for the environment and educating other youth on how to make a difference in their own communities. All I request is that visitors to our islands be asked to do the same, to repay Hawaii's natural spaces and communities for their hospitality with a small contribution that would go to preserving these islands for future generations.

Sincerely,
Perry Dye



3/29/2023

FIN Committee
Hawai'i State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the House Committee on Finance,

Position: Support SB304 SD2 HD2.

The Surfrider Foundation is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of our ocean, waves, and beaches. Surfrider maintains a network of over 150 chapters and academic clubs nationwide, including 4 chapters in the Hawaiian Islands. The Surfrider Foundation focuses on many aspects of the environment such as coastal protection, plastic pollution, and water quality.

The Surfrider Foundation, Hawai'i region, is testifying in **strong support of SB304 SD2 HD2** (hereafter "SB304"), which would establish a visitor green fee program administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR).

Our beaches, parks, reefs, forests, hiking trails, and other natural resources are paramount to sustaining our way of life and, similarly, our economic engine. These resources are intertwined with our visitor sector, as the tourism economy depends on Hawai'i's iconic natural resources. However, our islands are facing escalating visitor impacts, climate change, and localized threats to our ecosystems. Hawai'i currently only invests \$9 per tourist back in the environment, and less than 1% of the state budget goes towards conservation. We currently face an estimated conservation funding gap of \$360 million per year.

SB304 would establish an innovative funding stream to support the critical conservation efforts needed to maintain Hawai'i as a healthy, sustainable region for future generations to enjoy, as well as a visitor destination. A transformational investment in Hawai'i's natural resources through a visitor green fee program provides a pathway to build environmental and economic resilience for our local communities and our visitor industry. Green fee models have successfully been implemented at visitor destinations across the world, particularly in other island communities such as Palau, the British Virgin Islands, Maldives, Bali, El Nido, the Galapagos, Mentawais, and the Balearic Islands.¹

For the past few years, the Surfrider Foundation has been involved in Hawai'i's green fee efforts. Building on the success of the natural resources allocation of the Honolulu Transient Accommodation Tax passing in 2021, we're excited to have the opportunity to testify. Thank you for your consideration of this testimony in support of SB304, submitted on the behalf of the Surfrider Foundation's 4 Chapters in Hawai'i and all of our members who live in the state and visit to enjoy the many coastal recreational opportunities offered by all of the islands' coastlines.

Sincerely,

Camile Cleveland
Volunteer Policy Coordinator
Surfrider Foundation, O'ahu Chapter

¹ [GREEN PASSPORT - Innovative Financing Solutions for Conservation in Hawai'i](#), Conservation International, 2019

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 10:43:27 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Helen Cox	Kauai Climate Action Coalition	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and Committee Members,

I am testifying on behalf of Kauai Climate Action Coalition, a group of approximately 150 Kauai residents committed to addressing the climate crisis we face through education, policy change, and direct action. We urge you to support SB304 SD2 HD2 to establish a green impact fee on visitors within the Department of Land and Natural Resource. We all know that visitors have an enormous impact on our environment. The fee from visitors will pay for a license to visit state parks, forest, hiking trails, or other state natural areas. The collected funds can then to be used for needed maintenance and improvements of our natural environment.

This is just fee that visitors are willing to pay since they enjoy the wonderful place that is Hawaii. It is a necessary fee to enable the state to maintain our beaches, trails, forests, and parks for all to enjoy. This is particularly important given the toll that impacts of the climate emergency are having. The effective start date is appropriate as is funding for the visitor impact fee strategic plan and positions for the visitor impact fee program. Please pass SB304 SD2 HD2. Mahalo!

Helen Cox, Chair

Kauai Climate Action Coalition



Aloha committee members,

My name is Arwen Revere and I'm a high school student from Kailua and a member of the environmental organization Wild Kids, whom I am representing today. Wild Kids is in strong support of SB304. We believe that this green initiative would be extremely beneficial in protecting our environment from the effects of tourism. Hawai'i's natural resources are vital to sustaining our way of life and economy, including the tourism industry. Without Hawai'i's iconic natural resources such as our forests and beaches, tourism would drop dramatically. The impacts of visitors, climate change, and localized threats to our ecosystems are becoming extremely destructive. Having an innovative funding stream such as the one suggested in this bill would fund the critical conservation efforts that are needed to support Hawai'i's ecosystems. Wild Kids believes that we need sustainable tactics to protect the islands for future generations to enjoy. This includes the future of industries that depend on Hawai'i as a visitor destination. A visitor green fee program could provide methods to build environmental and economic resilience for our local communities.

Additionally, we would like to highlight the importance of these funds being accessible to non-profit organizations. Funding such as this is vital to the success of conservation organizations such as Wild Kids. By supporting non-profit organizations such as ours, you help to uplift the next generation.

As elected officials, you have the opportunity to help pass a groundbreaking bill into law. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with. As a representative of the next generation, I ask you to please protect our environment for your children, grandchildren, and beyond.

Thank you for hearing our testimony.

Arwen Revere, on behalf of Wild Kids

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting SB 304 SD2 HD2, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees.**

**Committee on Finance
March 29, 2023, 3:00 PM
Conference Room 308 and via Videoconference**

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) strongly supports SB 304 SD2 HD2, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees, which establishes a visitor impact fee program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), through which the Department will collect a fee for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. It also establishes the visitor impact fee special fund to protect and manage natural resources.

SB 304 SD2 HD2 would establish an innovative funding stream to support the critical conservation efforts needed to maintain Hawai'i as a healthy, sustainable home for future generations, as well as a world-class visitor destination. Our natural resources sustain our way of life, feed our families, and drive our local economy. Although Hawai'i's natural beauty is a top tourist attraction and our resources provide many ecosystem services for tourists, conservation efforts receive less than 1% of the State's annual budget. A visitor impact fee could help close Hawai'i's conservation funding gap, which has been estimated at \$360 million annuallyⁱ. TNC supports ensuring this funding supports the broad array of conservation efforts that face impacts from and benefit tourists.

A January 2023 poll of Hawai'i residents showed strong public support for a visitor impact fee, with 63% of voters supporting a \$50 per-person annual visitor fee to protect and restore natural and cultural resources impacted by tourism and climate change. There was also strong support for an array of actions to make the islands more resilient; for example, over 70% support protecting and restoring coral reefs, removing and controlling invasive species, and protecting and restoring native species. Additionally, 88% agree that "tourists should pay their fair share to protect and manage natural, cultural, and recreation resources in Hawai'i," and a similar proportion (89%) agrees that "Hawai'i should increase its investment in protecting land, water, wildlife, and recreational resources."ⁱⁱ All of these priorities can be supported through a visitor impact fee and fund as would be established under SB 304 SD2 HD2.

Hawai'i's visitors directly affect and benefit natural resources, whether they visit these resources or not – such as steady supplies of fresh water from forests, and shoreline protection from reefs – and should directly contribute to their conservation as well. Additionally, we are facing pressures from climate change, including increased flooding, coastal erosion, sea level rise, coral bleaching, loss of native forest, rising temperatures, and increased threats of extinction for endangered species, DLNR and organizations like TNC are working to protect and restore our

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islands' critical natural resources. Additional funding is needed to increase the pace and scale of these conservation efforts to offset the growing impacts from visitors and climate change. The visitor impact fee and special fund established in SB 304 SD2 HD2 would allow for more sustained funding to scale efforts and address our conservation needs while supporting the development of green jobs to conserve and manage our natural resources without increasing fees or taxes on residents.

A transformational investment in Hawai'i's natural resources through a visitor impact fee program and special fund is necessary to build environmental and economic resilience for our local communities and our visitor industry. By investing in our environment today and into the future, we can ensure that residents and visitors are able to enjoy our incomparable natural environment and island lifestyle for generations to come.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support SB 304 SD2 HD2.

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i and Palmyra is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which all life depends. The Conservancy has helped protect more than 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i and Palmyra Atoll. We manage 40,000 acres in 13 nature preserves and work in over 50 coastal communities to help protect and restore the nearshore reefs and fisheries of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties, and communities to protect forests and coral reefs for their ecological values and for the many benefits they provide to people.

ⁱ von Saltza, E. 2019. Green Passport: Innovative Financing Solutions for Conservation in Hawai'i. A report prepared for Conservation International.

ⁱⁱ Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of Hawai'i voters to assess their views on a range of environmental issues, including support for a \$50 fee collected from visitors to be used to protect and restore land, water, wildlife, and cultural resources that are impacted by tourism (sometimes referred to as a "green fee"). From Jan. 8-19, 2023, FM3 completed 864 online and telephone (landline and wireless) interviews with Hawai'i voters. The margin of sampling error for the study is +/-3.5% at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within the sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%. The study was funded by The Nature Conservancy, Resources Legacy Fund, and Trust for Public Land. A memo summarizing poll results is available upon request.

TESTIMONY OF PACIFIC WHALE FOUNDATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2023
3:00 PM

IN SUPPORT OF SENATE Bill 304 SD2 HD2

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Pacific Whale Foundation (PWF), a non-profit with 4,000 members, whose mission is to protect the ocean through science and advocacy and inspire environmental stewardship, we stand in **support** of Senate Bill 304, SD2 HD2 – Relating to Visitor Impact Fees.

Every year, millions of tourists visit our islands to enjoy the beautiful beaches, rich cultural heritage, and unique natural environment that Hawaii has to offer. While this influx of tourists is undoubtedly beneficial for the state's economy, it also puts a significant strain on local resources and infrastructure. Senate Bill 304 would establish the visitor impact fee program within the department of land and natural resources, through which the department will collect a fee from visitors for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural areas. The proposed visitor impact fees would provide a much-needed source of revenue to help offset the costs associated with hosting visitors.

These fees collected would also help to ensure that visitors are aware of the impact they have on the state's resources and encourage them to be more responsible and sustainable during their stay. This, in turn, could help to preserve Hawaii's unique environment and culture for future generations. We believe that the proposed visitor impact fees are necessary, and long overdue.

Pacific Whale Foundation respectfully asks the committee to take favorable action on Senate Bill 304. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



Protecting the ocean through science and advocacy, and inspiring environmental stewardship

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 1:12:13 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
John Leong	Kupu	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Honorable Committee Members,

My name is John Leong, and I am the CEO and co-founder of Kupu. On behalf of Kupu, it's my pleasure to testify in strong support of S.B. 304 S.D. 2 H.D. 2, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees. As written, this bill could greatly improve Hawai'i's capacity to care for our environment and truly begin the hard work needed to restore our environment. As many testifiers have explained in previous hearings, Hawai'i suffers from a conservation deficit, meaning that as a state we significantly underspend and undermanage our precious natural resources, leaving our water, air, soil and seas vulnerable to harms that eventually reduce our access to clean air, drinkable water, swimmable oceans, and undermine our food security. Just as we have invested in important parts of our economy to grow the industries that currently thrive in Hawai'i, we must also invest in our environment to sustain the benefits it provides us.

As background, Kupu was founded in 2007 in Hawai'i, and has since grown into our state's largest youth-focused conservation nonprofit. Each year, hundreds of youth and young adults come through our programs to learn about careers in sustainability, and to have their first hands-on experience, internship, or job in conservation, sustainable agriculture, sustainable energy, or environmental education. Hawai'i's youth are knowledgeable and passionate about our environment, and with the right opportunity many would choose a career that focuses on restoring our islands or caring for our natural and cultural resources. SB 304 would support these youth by giving them greater opportunities in green jobs. This, in turn, will bolster our economy, not just by growing our sustainability sector, but by caring for the natural beauty and environment upon which many of our dominant industries rely.

Please pass SB 304. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

John Leong



House Committee on Finance

Hawai'i Alliance for Progressive Action (HAPA) Supports: SB782 SD2 HD1

Wednesday, March 29, 2023 3:00 p.m. Conference Room 308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Members of the Committee,

HAPA supports SB304 SD2 HD2, which establishes the Visitor Impact Fee Program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources, through which the department will collect a fee from visitors for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. Establishes the Visitor Impact Fee Special Fund. Appropriates funds for the Visitor Impact Fee Strategic Plan and positions for the Visitor Impact Fee Program.

There is a critical need for additional and scaled revenue to protect, restore, and enhance Hawai'i's irreplaceable natural resources, including our oceans, reefs, beaches, forests, and streams. While our visitor industry plays a substantial role in our State economy, the 10 million visitors to our islands each year exact a heavy toll on our natural resources. These resources are invaluable to the livelihoods of our local residents and integral drivers of our statewide economy as well as our visitor industry. Right now, we have fallen short on funding resources to conserve, restore, and protect our environment - and we are facing a closing window of opportunity to act. In order to meet our sustainability goals, invest in climate solutions to protect our State, and close our conservation funding gap, we must generate a funding source that is sustainable for years to come.

A poll from 2022 of Hawai'i residents revealed that over two-thirds of Hawai'i voters support implementing a visitor green fee to fund the protection of natural and cultural resources, and 88% believe that visitors should pay their fair share for natural resources.

In addition to state agencies, there are many organizations already doing the important work of implementing solutions across our State, and we must uplift and scale that work to meet our local challenges. The grant program would open up transformational funding for many groups each year, including City & County who manage many of our beaches and coastlines.

Benefits of a Visitor Impact Fee include, generating a new pool of funding through the tourism industry, Hawaii can create independent economic resilience rather than rely on federal support during the onset of a recession.

Using estimates from Kupu 'Aina Corps and the State, Hawaii Green Fee has the potential to create ~1,000 local jobs that are sustainably funded for residents. This opens up long-term, purposeful career paths in the face of a looming recession.

With tourism as a primary economic driver in Hawai'i, investing in the resources visitors come to see will ensure they are left for future generations of residents and tourists. This is an opportunity to bridge the gap between visitors and residents toward protecting Hawai'i. There is a current inequity of visitor investment in the places they impact. For example, Hawaii's tourism industry accounts for 5% of total water usage, yet, water conservation measures are only being imposed on residents, not tourists (Maui County).

With the federal investment from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), our State has the potential to access a significant amount of federal funding with a Visitor Impact Fee, since a State must provide matching funds to access these federal dollars. The pool of funding generated from a green fee has the potential to maximize, and double, our impact and investment in jobs, infrastructure, environment, and economic resilience.

Our visitors and residents rely on a healthy environment for their livelihoods and way of life. With increasing impacts of the biodiversity crisis, climate crisis, water crisis, and more, we must invest in solving these local challenges before it is too late.

Hawai'i's total conservation funding gap has been estimated at \$360 million annually. These unfunded programs protect the watersheds that generate our islands' only source of fresh drinking water, the reefs that protect more than \$830 million worth of coastal infrastructure each year and generate \$13.4 million annually in local fisheries benefits, and other critical natural resources that provide priceless economic, recreational, and cultural values to residents and visitors to our islands. The visitor green fee funding priorities we support include:

- Protecting, restoring, and enhancing our natural & cultural resources
- Scaling a green workforce for local residents
- Implementing nature-based solutions to build environmental resilience in the face of increasing impacts

Please support SB304 SD2 HD2.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,



Anne Frederick
Executive Director



March 29, 2023

Representative Kyle Yamashita
Chair, Committee on Finance

Representative Lisa Kitagawa
Vice Chair, Committee on Finance

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 304, SD2, HD2 Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Resources Legacy Fund (RLF), we are writing in support SB 304, SD2, HD2 which establishes a visitor impact fee program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources, through which the department will collect a fee for a license to visit a state park, beach, forest, trail, or other natural area.

Recent polling confirms that:

- 63% of Hawai'i voters support a \$50 per-person annual visitor fee to protect and restore natural and cultural resources impacted by tourism and climate change.
- 88% of voters believe that tourists should pay their fair share to protect and manage natural, cultural, and recreation resources in Hawai'i; and
- 89% agree that Hawai'i should increase its investment in protecting land, water, wildlife and recreational resources.

Voters want to see these funds invested across multiple priorities, including:

- Protecting and restoring coral reefs
- Protecting and preserving beaches and coasts
- Removing and controlling invasive species
- Restoring wetland and coastal areas and reefs that provide protection from floods and sea level rise
- Restoring wetland and coastal areas and reefs that provide wildlife habitat; and
- Protecting and restoring native species

The state has created programs, but to date failed to sufficiently fund these priorities through state management and/or community-based stewardship of these places. Until now, the state has neither provided nor identified adequate funding to protect against the real and increasing impacts of climate change, including increasing flooding, coastal erosion, and sea-level rise. A visitor impact fee offers a net-positive investment solution not only for the environment and the visitors who come to Hawai'i to enjoy it, but for the economy, as well.

We see an imperative to generate sustained and dedicated funding -- at least \$300 million annually -- sufficient to meet the needs of our state's natural and cultural resources. Most importantly, we support funding the right mix of natural and cultural resource projects, community stewardship, and a Commission to make funding recommendations to the Board of Land and Natural Resources to help ensure effective implementation of priority programs and projects.

This bill will enable the State of Hawai'i to meet these ongoing and increasing needs and provide a durable funding source that will enable the state to invest hundreds of millions of dollars to protect and restore our natural resources for present and future generations, while creating jobs for Hawai'i residents to care for these resources.

SB 304, SD2, HD2 provides a transformative opportunity to protect Hawai'i's magnificent natural resources for present and future generations. We respectfully urge you to approve this important legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 304, SD2, HD2.

Sincerely,
Jocelyn Garovoy Herbert
Senior Program Officer, Resources Legacy Fund



TO Interested Parties

FROM Dave Metz, Miranda Everitt, and Denny Han
FM3 Research

RE: Hawai'i Voters Support for a Tourism Impact Fee

DATE February 16, 2023

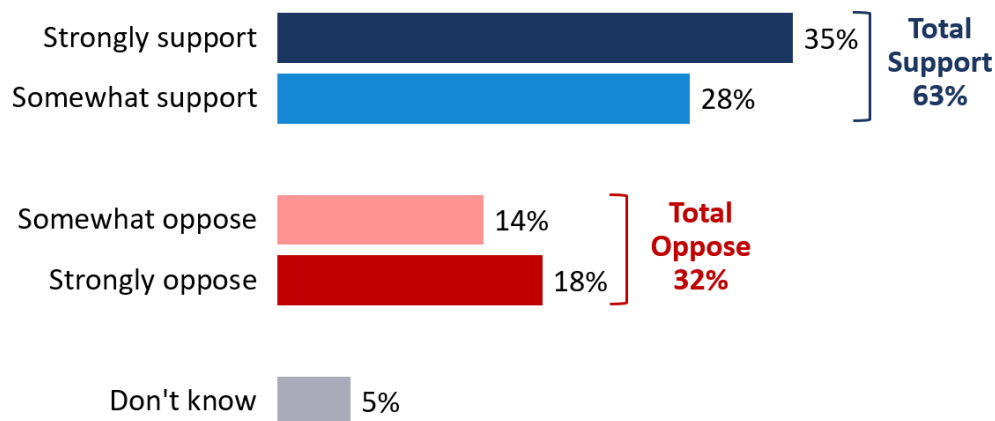
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of 864 Hawai'i voters to assess views of a proposed \$50 annual visitor fee to fund conservation in the state.ⁱ The results show that Hawai'i voters overwhelmingly agree that visitors should pay their fair share to protect the state's environment. More specifically, **three in five support a visitor fee - with broad support across major demographic groups.**

Detailed findings are as follows:

- **Nearly two-thirds of voters support a \$50 per-person annual visitor fee to protect and restore natural and cultural resources impacted by tourism and climate change.** As shown in Figure 1, more than one-third (35%) say they "strongly" support the proposed policy.

Figure 1: Support for a Tourism Impact Fee Proposal

Some people have proposed establishing a \$50 per-person annual fee that visitors would pay to use state and county beaches, parks and trails in Hawai'i. Money raised would be used to protect and restore land, water and wildlife, and cultural resources that are impacted by tourism and climate change in Hawai'i.



Majority support for the proposal cuts across major partisan, geographic, and demographic lines, including:

- 72% of Democrats, 59% of independents, and 51% of Republicans;
 - 66% of small-town voters, 64% of rural voters, 63% of city voters, and 60% of suburban voters;
 - 61% of Native Hawaiian voters, 66% of Japanese American voters, 66% of Filipino American voters, and 63% of white voters;
 - 66% of women and 61% of men; and
 - 70% of voters ages 18-49, 60% of voters ages 50-64, and 55% of voters 65 and older.
- **Underlying support for this policy is a broadly-shared belief that tourists should help fund conservation.** Nine in ten (88%) agree with the statement "Tourists should pay their fair share to protect and manage natural, cultural, and recreation resources in Hawai'i." A similar proportion (89%) agrees in principle that "Hawai'i should increase its investment in protecting land, water, wildlife and recreational resources."
 - **Voters see a wide range of conservation as high priorities for investment.** As shown in Figure 2, more than seven in ten rate a wide range of projects as "very important" targets for investment from a tourism impact fee - led by protecting and restoring coral reefs.

Figure 2: Investment Priorities for a Tourism Impact Fee

I am going to read you a list of specific projects and services that could be funded with money from the proposed visitor fee. Please tell me how important each one is to you: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important

Potential Project	Extremely/ Very Important
Protecting and restoring coral reefs	77%
Protecting and preserving our beaches and coasts	77%
Removing and controlling invasive species	76%
Restoring wetland and coastal areas and reefs that provide protection against floods and sea-level rise	74%
Restoring wetland and coastal areas and reefs that provide wildlife habitat	73%
Protecting and restoring native species	73%

In conclusion, Hawai'i voters want to see increased investment in conservation, and to that end, **majorities across partisan and demographic lines support a proposed \$50 annual visitor fee to protect and restore tourism-impacted environmental resources.**

ⁱ **Methodology:** From January 8-19, 2023, FM3 completed 864 online and telephone (landline and wireless) interviews with Hawai'i voters. The margin of sampling error for the study is +/-3.5% at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within the sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.



March 29, 2023

3 p.m.

Conference Room 308 and Videoconference

To: House Committee on Finance

Rep. Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair

Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

From: Grassroot Institute of Hawaii

Ted Kefalas, Director of Strategic Campaigns

RE: SB304 SD2 HD2 — RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

Comments Only

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

The Grassroot Institute of Hawaii would like to offer comments on [SB304 SD2 HD2](#), which would establish a \$50 license to be paid by any non-resident aged 15 or older in order to visit a state park, beach, forest, hiking trail or other natural area owned by the state.

We have grave concerns about several aspects of this bill, ranging from its legality to its applicability and enforcement.

In addition, we believe that this proposal may have unforeseen consequences for small businesses in the state and for the economy as a whole.

Finally, we have questions about the allocation of the revenues from the fee and whether the program would properly benefit Hawaii residents.

We hope you will consider the following issues as you deliberate on this measure:

>> Constitutionality: There is reason to doubt whether this program would pass constitutional muster. The U.S. Supreme Court frowns upon any law that would restrict the right to travel

freely between states and has ruled against disparate resident/nonresident tax schemes under both the Privileges and Immunities Clause and the Equal Protection Clause.¹

While different resident user fees such as hunting licenses or park entry fees have been upheld, the licensing scheme proposed here is far broader in scope and more akin to a tax than a user fee.

The problem is partly one of scope. In order to fall into the category of a user fee (like different park entry fees for residents and non-residents), a visitor impact fee would have to be so limited in application that many tourists would not have to pay it in order to enjoy their planned Hawaii vacation.

However, if it were so limited, then the fee would not result in the levels of revenue envisioned in this bill. If the fee were generally applicable to nearly every Hawaii visitor, it would cease to be a limited user fee, making it much more vulnerable to a legal challenge.

Given that the rationale for the fee is the impact of visitors upon the natural environment, the state cannot plausibly claim that there is a rational basis for treating the impact of tourists as more injurious to Hawaii's ecosystem than full-time residents.

Thus, unless residents were also charged for a similar license, the entire scheme risks being overturned by a federal court.

>> Applicability: Though presented as a fee that will only be paid by tourists, this bill underlines the fundamental difficulty of delineating who is "local" and who is a visitor.

Under the bill, anyone who can provide a valid state ID, valid Hawaii school ID, an income tax statement from the previous year or some form of official documentation from a government agency, financial institute, insurance agency or utility agency would count as a resident for the purpose of the license.

Thus, anyone who has moved to the mainland for more than a year or so is now a "visitor" and subject to the fee. This could lead to some very strange results.

¹ See, e.g., *Crandall v. Nevada*, 75 U.S. 35 (1867); *Austin v. New Hampshire*, 420 U.S. 656 (1975) (invalidating a "commuter income tax" applying only to nonresidents); and *Metropolitan Life Insurance Co. v. Ward*, 470 U.S. 869 (1985) (invalidating a law that taxed out-of-state insurance companies at a higher rate than in-state companies).

Under this bill, Oprah Winfrey is a resident because she can produce a utility bill, but Iam Tongi, the “American Idol” contestant whose family was “priced out of paradise,” is a visitor.

A billionaire who pays taxes in Hawaii as well as other states is a “resident,” but a local family who had to move to Nevada to make ends meet will have to pay hundreds of dollars if they want to come home for grandma’s birthday party at the beach.

Moreover, the bill makes no mention of members of the military stationed in Hawaii. Will they be exempted from the fee, or will the state require licenses from raw enlistees who are not here by choice?

>> Administration and enforcement: There would be considerable logistical hurdles involved in administering this fee so that it would not be automatically applied to any non-resident who enters the state, regardless of whether they intend to use any state park or beach.

After all, someone who is only passing through or only attending meetings in a hotel would not need to pay the license fee. If they were charged anyway, this would make it a fee to enter the state, which would certainly be invalidated by a court.

This problem leads to serious questions of how the license would be enforced, especially in areas with no point of entry where visitors could show the license. The penalties section of the bill clearly indicates the intent to include an enforcement mechanism, but it is unclear how this will be accomplished.

Would government officials patrol Hawaii’s state parks and beaches, demanding licenses from anyone who appears to be a tourist? This could quickly devolve into a civil rights issue.

In addition, the program incentivizes designing a vacation so as to avoid locations that require the payment of the impact fee. It is very possible that the unintended consequence of the impact fee will simply be to increase the visitor impact on beaches and natural areas that do not fall under state control. This would not only frustrate the stated intent of the bill, but could create new problems of visitor congestion and impact.

Delaying the effective date of the program until July 2025 and delaying the assessment of penalties for five years would push the administrative and enforcement problems down the road. However, those issues will still exist whenever the program and penalty period begin.

In addition, administration and enforcement could end up costing the state significant resources in both labor and funding. It is unclear from this bill whether enough research has been done on the full cost of this program.

>> **Economic impact:** This bill assumes that a visitor impact fee would not negatively affect tourism. However, if the average family visiting Hawaii had to add a \$200 license fee to their vacation budget, it is likely that they would try to compensate for that expense.

Hawaii's independent restaurants, retail establishments, tour companies and other small businesses depend on visitor spending for their survival. Though it might not affect transportation or lodging, this license fee could cut into visitor spending in ways that are most likely to harm small, local businesses.

Hawaii already has some of the world's highest tourism taxes,² and this is effectively another tax on tourism. As such, we can expect it to ripple through that industry in ways that might not worry larger companies, but could have a real impact on Hawaii's economy anyway.

>> **Resident benefits:** Though pitched as a way to address the impact of visitors on our state, this licensing fee is more properly described as a funding source for environmental grants.

The revenues for this bill are not being used to fix roads, renovate the airports or even improve sanitation. The "visitor impact" to be addressed by this bill is not specific to visitors, but rather includes a broad range of objectives related to climate change, natural resources and the environment.

These might be worthy goals, but one must ask why a new source of funding must be created for them and why those revenues are not being used for a purpose with more immediate benefits to residents — such as infrastructure improvements, education, affordable housing or tax cuts.

In sum, this "visitor impact fee" program appears arbitrary, unfair, fiscally questionable and unconstitutional.

If Hawaii wishes to pull more money out of tourists to address the visitor impact on our state, the Legislature can always consider another increase in the transient accommodations tax. That

² Alison Fox, "[These Cities — Including 3 in the U.S. — Have the Most Expensive Tourist Taxes in the World. Study Shows,](#)" Travel + Leisure, Aug. 12, 2022.

would at least be easier to administer and would allow for more discussion regarding how those funds should be used.

As envisioned in this bill, the visitor's license runs contrary to the spirit of aloha.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Ted Kefalas
Director of Strategic Campaigns
Grassroot Institute of Hawaii



HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM
A S S O C I A T I O N

Testimony of
Mufi Hannemann
President & CEO
Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association

House Committee on Finance
Senate Bill 304, SD2, HD2
March 29, 2023

Chair Yamashita and members of the Committee, mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association, the state's oldest and largest private sector visitor industry organization.

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association—nearly 700 members strong, representing more than 50,000 hotel rooms and nearly 40,000 lodging workers—have strongly advocated for the establishment of impact fees at high-traffic sites that are especially impacted by visitors. Our position on this issue remains unchanged; we support impact fees so long as the monies generated are focused on maintaining and improving the sites in which they are collected for.

For these reasons, HLTA supports Senate Bill 304, SD2, HD2.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer this testimony.



SB 304, SD2, HD2, RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

MARCH 29, 2023 · HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE ·
CHAIR REP. KYLE YAMASHITA

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports SB 304, SD2, HD2, relating to visitor impact fees, which effective 7/1/2025, establishes the visitor impact fee program within the department of land and natural resources, through which the department will collect a fee from visitors for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area; establishes the visitor impact fee special fund effective 7/1/2023; requires report to the legislature on strategic plan and timetable for objectives and implementation of the visitor impact fee program; and appropriates funds for the visitor impact fee strategic plan and positions for the visitor impact fee program.

According to a report produced by the Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission, global sea levels could rise more than three feet by 2100, with more recent projections showing this occurring as early as 2060. In turn, over the next 30 to 70 years, approximately 6,500 structures and 19,800 people statewide will be exposed to chronic flooding.

Additionally, an estimated \$19 billion in economic loss would result from chronic flooding of land and structures located in exposure areas. Finally, approximately 38 miles of coastal roads and 550 cultural sites would be chronically flooded, on top of the 13 miles of beaches that have already been lost on Kaua'i, O'ahu, and Maui to erosion fronting shoreline armoring, like seawalls.

Furthermore, according to research conducted by Michael B. Gerrard from Columbia Law School, modern-day slavery tends to increase after natural disasters or conflicts where large numbers of people are displaced from their homes. In the decades to come, says Gerrard, **climate change will very likely lead to a significant increase in the number of people who are displaced and, thus vulnerable, to human trafficking.** While the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015 established objectives to limit global temperature increases and several international agreements are aimed at combating modern-day slavery, it is highly uncertain whether they will be adequate to cope with the scale of the problem that is likely to occur as a result of climate change.

As we work to reduce carbon emissions and stave off the worst consequences of climate change, we must begin preparing for the adverse impact of sea level rise on our shores. We are now quantifying the speed at which we must act. We cannot continue to develop the 25,800-acre statewide sea level rise exposure area—one-third of which is designated for urban use—without risking massive structural damage and, potentially, great loss of life.

Therefore, we should take steps to accelerate Hawai'i's efforts to address climate change and develop a clean economy, including by implementing "green fees" that ensure our state's visitors pay their fair share to sustain our 'āina. New Zealand, the Maldives, Cancun, and Venice, and numerous other countries have green fee programs for visitors, which vary from \$1 per night to a \$100 entrance fee for the purpose of environmental conservation. **Palau's per-tourist investment in its natural environment is \$92. New Zealand's is \$188, and the Galapagos Islands' is \$373. Hawai'i's is just \$9 per tourist,** according to a report from Conservation International's Green Passport initiative. We need to catch up. For the sake of our keiki, we cannot afford to wait to solidify strategies to preserve our island home for generations to come.

Kris Coffield · Executive Director, Imua Alliance · (808) 679-7454 · kris@imuaalliance.org



Maui Hotel & Lodging
ASSOCIATION

Testimony of
Lisa H. Paulson
Executive Director
Maui Hotel & Lodging Association

House Committee on Finance
Senate Bill 304 SD2 HD2: Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

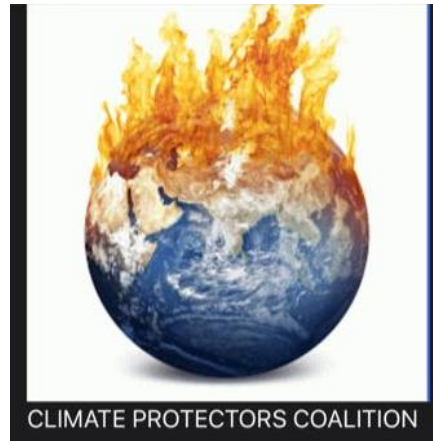
March 29, 2023, 3:00 pm
Conference Room 308

The Maui Hotel & Lodging Association (MHLA) is the legislative arm of the visitor industry for Maui County. We represent over 180 property and allied business members and 22,000 employees. **MHLA supports Senate Bill 304 SD2 HD1**, which establishes the visitor impact fee program within the department of land and natural resources, through which the department will collect a fee from visitors for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. Establishes the visitor impact fee special fund effective 7/1/2023. Requires report to the legislature on strategic plan and timetable for objectives and implementation of the visitor impact fee program. Appropriates funds for the visitor impact fee strategic plan and positions for the visitor impact fee program.

MHLA fully supports the use of impact fees in Senate Bill 304. We also want to encourage a greater nexus to the fees being charged and ensure that any impact fee remains separate from any general governmental fund and that these funds must be used to protect, rehabilitate, and improve the resource at which it was collected. This will guarantee that our natural resources will retain their beauty and health.

For these reasons stated above, **MHLA supports Senate Bill 304, SD2 HD2.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



To: The Honorable Chair Kyle Yamashita, the Honorable Vice-chair Lisa Kitagawa, and members of the House Committee on Finance

From: The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)

Re: Hearing **SB304 SD2 HD2 RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES**

Hearing: Wednesday, March 29, 2023, 3:00 p.m. CR308

Aloha Chair Yamashita, the Honorable Vice-chair Lisa Kitagawa, and members of the House Committee on Finance:

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i **STRONGLY SUPPORT SB304 SD2 HD2.**

The Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition (HIROC) is a group of scientists, educators, filmmakers and environmental advocates who have been working since 2017 to protect Hawaii's coral reefs and ocean. HIROC is deeply concerned about protecting marine resource areas.

The Climate Protectors Hawai'i seek to educate and engage the local community in climate change action, to help Hawai'i show the world the way back to a safe and stable climate. Large numbers of visitors flying to Hawaii generate a huge amount of greenhouse gases.

The **millions of visitors** to Hawaii looking to enjoy our natural resources **create a need for substantial funding** to protect and maintain those natural resources.

It is **appropriate and fair to require visitors to those resource areas to purchase an annual “conservation passport,”** (a better name than “green fee”) for which **\$50** seems a reasonable amount. Hawai'i residents support our natural resources through taxes; visitors should contribute as well. Other tourism-focused economies, such as New Zealand, the Republic of Palau, Galapagos Islands, and the Maldives have been able to invest more in protecting and maintaining their environments by charging visitors. Hawai'i should too!

Please pass this bill!

Mahalo!

Hawai'i Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawai'i (by Ted Bohlen)



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
FINANCE
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 308
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2023 AT 3:00 P.M.

To The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
The Honorable Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Finance

SUPPORT FOR SB304 SD2 HD2 RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

The Maui Chamber of Commerce would like testify in **support for SB304 SD2 HD2** which establishes the visitor impact fee program within the department of land and natural resources, through which the department will collect a fee from visitors for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area; establishes the visitor impact fee special fund effective 7/1/2023; requires report to the legislature on strategic plan and timetable for objectives and implementation of the visitor impact fee program; and appropriates funds for the visitor impact fee strategic plan and positions for the visitor impact fee program.

The Chamber supports these fees as they are not fees imposed on residents for their use of our natural resources and it is imposed on only the visitors who use those resources.

The impact of visitors to our islands can be seen everywhere. While it is of course necessary to acknowledge the economy that is created around this industry, it is equally, if not more important, to understand the negative externalities of that industry and be proactive in mitigating them. While inviting visitors to be better stewards of the islands should continue, it is not enough. Our islands run huge deficits when it comes to funding both reactive and proactive conservation and sustainability efforts. The current levels of impact are not sustainable for a livable future in Hawai'i. We need more funding to expand this work.

The Chamber would like the legislature to consider that there are families that visit the state and it may be desirable to have some sort of family discounted fee.

For these reasons, we **support SB304 SD2 HD2**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

Testimony for SB304

Strong Support for SB304, with Social Equity amendments to subsidize HEALTHCARE for Hawaii's farmers via the Hawaii Visitor Green Fee.

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Representatives on the Finance Committee,

Mahalo for all your effort and thorough work on drafting this bill. The attempt to capture revenue to offset the costly environmental and financial impacts caused by the negative externalities of tourism and visitors on Hawaii's natural resources is long overdue.

Please make Hawaii's TOURISTS subsidize HEALTHCARE for Hawaii's FARMERS.

Please utilize the Hawaii Visitor Green Fee to address the worsening state of Hawaii's agricultural economy, the struggling mental and physical health of Hawaii's farmers, and the fact that Hawaii is dependent on importing 80-90% of its food.

Although the Visitor Green Fee does address restitution to the environment for the negative impact tourism has on Hawaii's natural resources, it does NOT address restitution towards Native Hawaiians and Hawaii residents who also suffer from the damages caused by the negative impacts of tourism on the quality of Life in Hawaii. This is a SOCIAL EQUITY issue. Residents in Hawaii must pay the high Cost of Living in Hawaii every day of the year, costs that are often exacerbated by the influx of international and Mainland tourists who have no familial or ancestral connection to Hawaii. Tourists and visitors who ultimately inflate the rental and housing markets, and energy/electricity, sewer, and potable water demands. Tourists and visitors who have no intention of assimilating to the Hawaiian lifestyle and culture and participating in the traditionally "local" family-oriented island economy while they are here.

On top of all that, tourists and visitors come to Hawaii from the Mainland and eat food imported from the Mainland! How ridiculous is that? Tourists are a huge demographic consuming a significant percentage of the 80-90% of all of Hawaii's food that is imported. The money all these tourists spend on imported food during their stay ultimately LEAVES Hawaii. As long as this continues, Hawaii's Tourism Industry and the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) will continue to fail at supporting Hawaii's Agricultural Industry, essentially squandering a golden opportunity to fuel a mutually beneficial relationship maximizing the economic potential between two compatible industries.

The food (whether imported or locally grown) that the tourists buy and consume while in Hawaii is the nexus between the Visitor Green Fee and Hawaii's agriculture industry.

Farming in Hawaii is difficult, physical work. The start-up costs for setting up a farm operation are more expensive than on the Mainland, and the ROI is slow and minimal for the amount of money, energy, and time expended. And yet, this is much more than just a food security issue for the people of Hawaii. This is a nutritional health issue, a cultural and ethnic oppression issue, a socioeconomic issue for the urban and rural communities that technically qualify as "food deserts" and do not have access to fresh healthy foods. This is a SOCIAL EQUITY issue. This is a resiliency and emergency management issue, especially in light of worsening climate change, natural disasters, and international conflicts.

The continued dependence on imported food, perpetuates the continued loss of Hawaii's consumers' dollars to the Mainland, Mexico and Central and South America where the imported food originates. Nearly ALL of that money spent on imported food LEAVES Hawaii. The residents do not benefit, and the State does not benefit in relative comparison to the major cons associated with the vulnerability and instability of this existing market structure that tentatively feeds the State of Hawaii each passing

year.

In order to significantly increase the quantity of locally grown agricultural produce and products sold in Hawaii, and lower the steep 80-90% imported food statistic, Hawaii needs more residents farming at a higher capacity and scale, continuously, year around. This will require more residents to leave their part time and full time jobs, with healthcare insurance benefits, to not only farm more hours of the day/week/month, but also take on the additional risk of either going without coverage OR minimizing their monthly income to less than \$2,000 per month to qualify for MedQuest. In a state where rent is routinely greater than \$2,000 per month, qualified MedQuest recipients are pigeonholed in poverty, until they can figure out how to generate enough monthly income to pay for insurance plans out of pocket.

To make matters even more dismal, the results from the recent University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) Seeds Of Wellbeing survey of Hawaii's agricultural producers (n=408) nearly 35% of the respondents, 1 out of 3, reported experiencing symptoms of depression. Over 50% of the respondents under the age of 45 years old reported symptoms of depression. And over 8% of the respondents reported having thoughts of suicide. At this rate, who wants to farm? <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/sow-well/media/publications/>

If the State of Hawaii truly cares about food security, import substitution, and resiliency, then it must do better at supporting Hawaii's farmers and their financial bottom line. If the State of Hawaii genuinely cares about the future of Hawaii's agricultural industry and economic viability outside of tourism (a non-essential industry proven by COVID), then it must take better care of Hawaii's farmers and their families. NOTHING CHANGES IF NOTHING CHANGES.

The very least that the State of Hawaii can do for supporting Hawaii's agriculture industry, the bare minimum, is to provide comprehensive healthcare benefits for Hawaii's farmers and their children. By providing quality comprehensive healthcare coverage, the State of Hawaii will see more young, able-bodied residents making the transition away from their full time 9-to-5 jobs towards a more traditional Hawaiian lifestyle that enables farming at a greater scale and capacity. For many young farmers, the State subsidized healthcare for farmers will alleviate a huge financial stressor and the latent stressors associated with the fear of working in an accident-prone industry while being uninsured. MedQuest for farmers will also be a real incentive for many young residents to give farming a try. The insurance coverage will afford many young residents the opportunity to minimize the risk and try farming at least once in their career.

Raise the \$2,000 per month income cap on MedQuest for Hawaii's farmers. Give farmers an opportunity to be insured and not be pigeonholed in poverty. Make the Visitor Green Fee \$75 per visitor, and earmark \$25 of every Visitor Green Fee to be allocated toward providing comprehensive healthcare (i.e. MedQuest) including Medical, Dental, Pharmacy, and Vision for all Hawaii residents who are actively farming commercially and/or for subsistence.

Tourism in Hawaii has been built on the backs of Hawaiians and locals since the beginning. Now it is time to rebuild Hawaiian agriculture on the back of the BILLION dollar tourism industry! This is SOCIAL EQUITY for the people of Hawaii.

Where can the State of Hawaii legally and effectively begin to levy the funds (via fees) from the Tourists? Which choke points can the State of Hawaii effectively capture and enforce the mandatory Visitor Green Fee?

1. The HDOT-Airports will coordinate with the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), and the Airlines, and will be responsible for the distribution, completion, and collection of visitor statistics and Visitor Green Fees from applicable (Non-Hawaii Resident) airline passengers. The process can be similar to the existing Agricultural Plant and Animal Declaration form. Passengers with current valid State of Hawaii Identification Cards or Drivers Licenses will be exempt from being charged the Visitor Green Fee.

2. Require by law, all car rental companies operating in the State of Hawaii to validate the visitor's/tourist's confirmation number from their Visitor Green Fee receipt upon check-in.
3. Require by law, all legal and registered Transient Vacation Rentals (Air Bnb, VRBO, etc.), Bed & Breakfasts, Resorts, Hotels, Motels, Timeshares, etc. to validate the visitor's/tourist's confirmation number from their Visitor Green Fee receipt upon check-in.

4. Require by law, participating State of Hawaii parks, beaches, and hiking trails to validate the visitor's/tourist's confirmation number from their Visitor Green Fee receipt upon check-in.
Please do the right thing and support local agriculture by providing healthcare coverage for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of our local farmers through the Hawaii Visitor Green Fee. The future of our culture depends on our ability to get the next generation farming again.

Mahalo nui loa.

Name	Maureen Smith
Email	maureensmith916@gmail.com

Testimony for SB304

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Mahalo nui loa.

Additional Comments

It is in everyone's best interest to support and provide assistance to those who choose to grow food and medicine in Hawaii. This help will ensure a continued drive toward sustainability for all farmers. In the uncertain world we live in we can take certain steps to help those who help us by providing locally grown and sourced food and medicine.

Name	Chet Collins
Email	chezchet2000@yahoo.com

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Mahalo nui loa.

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Additional Comments

I agree with the above. I cannot be a full time farmer if I have to work another full time job in order to get health insurance. It is an unworkable situation that needs to change.

Name

Sylvia Lessa

Email

pixiequeengoddess@gmail.com

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Mahalo nui loa.

Additional Comments

I support wholeheartedly SB304 and this testimony! Mahalo

Name

Chris Kauwe

Email

honihonihoney@hotmail.com

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Name Destiny Apilado

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Name Emma Chidgey

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Although the Visitor Green Fee does address restitution to the environment for the negative impact tourism has on Hawaii's natural resources, it does NOT address restitution towards Native Hawaiians and Hawaii residents who also suffer from the damages caused by the negative impacts of tourism on the quality of Life in Hawaii. This is a SOCIAL EQUITY issue. Residents in Hawaii must pay the high Cost of Living in Hawaii every day of the year, costs that are often exacerbated by the influx of international and Mainland tourists who have no familial or ancestral connection to Hawaii. Tourists and visitors who ultimately inflate the rental and housing markets, and energy/electricity, sewer, and potable water demands. Tourists and visitors who have no intention of assimilating to the Hawaiian lifestyle and culture and participating in the traditionally "local" family-oriented island economy while they are here.

On top of all that, tourists and visitors come to Hawaii from the Mainland and eat food imported from the Mainland! How ridiculous is that? Tourists are a huge demographic consuming a significant percentage of the 80-90% of all of Hawaii's food that is imported. The money all these tourists spend on imported food during their stay ultimately LEAVES Hawaii. As long as this continues, Hawaii's Tourism Industry and the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) will continue to fail at supporting Hawaii's Agricultural Industry, essentially squandering a golden opportunity to fuel a mutually beneficial relationship maximizing the economic potential between two compatible industries.

The food (whether imported or locally grown) that the tourists buy and consume while in Hawaii is the nexus between the Visitor Green Fee and Hawaii's agriculture industry.

Farming in Hawaii is difficult, physical work. The start-up costs for setting up a farm operation are more expensive than on the Mainland, and the ROI is slow and minimal for the amount of money, energy, and time expended. And yet, this is much more than just a food security issue for the people of Hawaii. This is a nutritional health issue, a cultural and ethnic oppression issue, a socioeconomic issue for the urban and rural communities that technically qualify as "food deserts" and do not have access to fresh healthy foods. This is a SOCIAL EQUITY issue. This is a resiliency and emergency management issue, especially in light of worsening climate change, natural disasters, and international conflicts.

The continued dependence on imported food, perpetuates the continued loss of Hawaii's consumers' dollars to the Mainland, Mexico and Central and South America where the imported food originates. Nearly ALL of that money spent on imported food LEAVES Hawaii. The residents do not benefit, and the State does not benefit in relative comparison to the major cons associated with the vulnerability and instability of this existing market structure that tentatively feeds the State of Hawaii each passing

year.

In order to significantly increase the quantity of locally grown agricultural produce and products sold in Hawaii, and lower the steep 80-90% imported food statistic, Hawaii needs more residents farming at a higher capacity and scale, continuously, year around. This will require more residents to leave their part time and full time jobs, with healthcare insurance benefits, to not only farm more hours of the day/week/month, but also take on the additional risk of either going without coverage OR minimizing their monthly income to less than \$2,000 per month to qualify for MedQuest. In a state where rent is routinely greater than \$2,000 per month, qualified MedQuest recipients are pigeonholed in poverty, until they can figure out how to generate enough monthly income to pay for insurance plans out of pocket.

To make matters even more dismal, the results from the recent University of Hawaii College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) Seeds Of Wellbeing survey of Hawaii's agricultural producers (n=408) nearly 35% of the respondents, 1 out of 3, reported experiencing symptoms of depression. Over 50% of the respondents under the age of 45 years old reported symptoms of depression. And over 8% of the respondents reported having thoughts of suicide. At this rate, who wants to farm? <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/sow-well/media/publications/>

If the State of Hawaii truly cares about food security, import substitution, and resiliency, then it must do better at supporting Hawaii's farmers and their financial bottom line. If the State of Hawaii genuinely cares about the future of Hawaii's agricultural industry and economic viability outside of tourism (a non-essential industry proven by COVID), then it must take better care of Hawaii's farmers and their families. NOTHING CHANGES IF NOTHING CHANGES.

The very least that the State of Hawaii can do for supporting Hawaii's agriculture industry, the bare minimum, is to provide comprehensive healthcare benefits for Hawaii's farmers and their children. By providing quality comprehensive healthcare coverage, the State of Hawaii will see more young, able-bodied residents making the transition away from their full time 9-to-5 jobs towards a more traditional Hawaiian lifestyle that enables farming at a greater scale and capacity. For many young farmers, the State subsidized healthcare for farmers will alleviate a huge financial stressor and the latent stressors associated with the fear of working in an accident-prone industry while being uninsured. MedQuest for farmers will also be a real incentive for many young residents to give farming a try. The insurance coverage will afford many young residents the opportunity to minimize the risk and try farming at least once in their career.

Raise the \$2,000 per month income cap on MedQuest for Hawaii's farmers. Give farmers an opportunity to be insured and not be pigeonholed in poverty. Make the Visitor Green Fee \$75 per visitor, and earmark \$25 of every Visitor Green Fee to be allocated toward providing comprehensive healthcare (i.e. MedQuest) including Medical, Dental, Pharmacy, and Vision for all Hawaii residents who are actively farming commercially and/or for subsistence.

Tourism in Hawaii has been built on the backs of Hawaiians and locals since the beginning. Now it is time to rebuild Hawaiian agriculture on the back of the BILLION dollar tourism industry! This is SOCIAL EQUITY for the people of Hawaii.

Where can the State of Hawaii legally and effectively begin to levy the funds (via fees) from the Tourists? Which choke points can the State of Hawaii effectively capture and enforce the mandatory Visitor Green Fee?

1. The HDOT-Airports will coordinate with the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA), and the Airlines, and will be responsible for the distribution, completion, and collection of visitor statistics and Visitor Green Fees from applicable (Non-Hawaii Resident) airline passengers. The process can be similar to the existing Agricultural Plant and Animal Declaration form. Passengers with current valid State of Hawaii Identification Cards or Drivers Licenses will be exempt from being charged the Visitor Green Fee.

2. Require by law, all car rental companies operating in the State of Hawaii to validate the visitor's/tourist's confirmation number from their Visitor Green Fee receipt upon check-in.
3. Require by law, all legal and registered Transient Vacation Rentals (Air Bnb, VRBO, etc.), Bed & Breakfasts, Resorts, Hotels, Motels, Timeshares, etc. to validate the visitor's/tourist's confirmation number from their Visitor Green Fee receipt upon check-in.

4. Require by law, participating State of Hawaii parks, beaches, and hiking trails to validate the visitor's/tourist's confirmation number from their Visitor Green Fee receipt upon check-in.
Please do the right thing and support local agriculture by providing healthcare coverage for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of our local farmers through the Hawaii Visitor Green Fee. The future of our culture depends on our ability to get the next generation farming again.

Mahalo nui loa.

Name	Robin Rush
Email	robinlr764@gmail.com

Testimony for SB304

Strong Support for SB304, with Social Equity amendments to subsidize HEALTHCARE for Hawaii's farmers via the Hawaii Visitor Green Fee.

Aloha e Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Representatives on the Finance Committee,

Mahalo for all your effort and thorough work on drafting this bill. The attempt to capture revenue to offset the costly environmental and financial impacts caused by the negative externalities of tourism and visitors on Hawaii's natural resources is long overdue.

Please make Hawaii's TOURISTS subsidize HEALTHCARE for Hawaii's FARMERS. Please utilize the Hawaii Visitor Green Fee to address the worsening state of Hawaii's agricultural economy, the struggling mental and physical health of Hawaii's farmers, and the fact that Hawaii is dependent on importing 80-90% of its food.

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On top of all that, tourists and visitors come to Hawaii from the Mainland and eat food imported from the Mainland! How ridiculous is that? Tourists are a huge demographic consuming a significant percentage of the 80-90% of all of Hawaii's food that is imported. The money all these tourists spend on imported food during their stay ultimately LEAVES Hawaii. As long as this continues, Hawaii's Tourism Industry and the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) will continue to fail at supporting Hawaii's Agricultural Industry, essentially squandering a golden opportunity to fuel a mutually beneficial relationship maximizing the economic potential between two compatible industries.

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4. Require by law, participating State of Hawaii parks, beaches, and hiking trails to validate the visitor's/tourist's confirmation number from their Visitor Green Fee receipt upon check-in.
Please do the right thing and support local agriculture by providing healthcare coverage for the mental and physical health and wellbeing of our local farmers through the Hawaii Visitor Green Fee. The future of our culture depends on our ability to get the next generation farming again.

Mahalo nui loa.

Name	Sandra Jennings
Email	freshfromthegarden@gmail.com

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 1:23:30 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Linda Legrande	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our natural resources need to be taken care of! Everybody knows if you have to pay for something, you tend to take better care of it. Please support this Bill.

Thank you, Linda Legrande

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 1:54:15 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kimberly De Souza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am testifying in **strong support of SB304** which is a much needed measure to offset tourist and visitor impacts, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources on our 'aina through a green fee program.

My name is Kimberly De Souza, I live in Kailua Kona on Hawai'i island and, especially over the past 10 years, I have seen coral reefs and natural ecosystems degraded by tourists who are happy to visit but don't seem to need to worry about the repercussions of their actions after they leave. I am taking the time to support this bill as I feel very strongly about how necessary it is for the future of our islands.

Working in the conservation sector, it is evident that there is an extreme lack of funding for conservation and cultural programs (not just in Hawai'i but the entire world). Conservation groups are struggling to combat so many factors which are constantly threatening our native ecosystems on land and in the sea. A large part of these factors is tourism. Therefore, the Green Fee is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, experience, and enjoy during their time here. As an island region, Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. The impacts of tourists on our natural and cultural resources is undeniable and while it is understandable that Hawai'i's economy relies heavily on tourism, it is inevitable that the public's perception of tourists is that of carelessness, it is easy to view tourists as people who come, take, and leave. This green fee will not only help change the public's perspectives about tourists but will also help to bolster and support conservation efforts across the state by providing the much needed additional funding.

This has become an increasingly important issue in Hawai'i which is already known as the extinction capital of the world and with sea level rise affecting our disappearing coastlines, we are going to need help in order to begin the much needed restoration of our home.

This bill is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations, and beyond. This fee has been needed for many years now and I am extremely happy to see that it is finally being proposed and I am hoping it will pass unanimously. On top of that, it has been found that 95% of Hawai'i voters believe it is our kuleana to care for the ocean for future generations, and 89%

agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources.

I urge the committee to pass a visitor green fee program this session, in order to begin the needed restoration for our home as soon as possible.

Mahalo nui loa for the opportunity to testify,

Kimberly De Souza

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 2:02:56 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Frohlich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm writing in strong support of SB 304, which will provide much-needed funds for the conservation and preservation of cultural and natural resources. As an invasive species botanist, I am at the front lines of witnessing the impacts of heavy use on our island's resources. By ensuring visitors pay their fair share to the preservation of these resources, we can ensure that our watersheds, reefs, and unique cultural sites will be preserved for generations of visitors and residents alike.

It is important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand on work already being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. I urge the committee to approve a comprehensive visitor green fee program during this session that provides funding for both state parks and other locations, and for non-profits in addition to state agencies.

SB304 offers a clear path to safeguarding, revitalizing, and enriching Hawai'i for local communities and visitors alike. This initiative has garnered significant public support and will benefit future generations for years to come.

Thank you,

Danielle Frohlich

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 2:57:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kalae	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Kalae Lopes and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State. My name is Kala'e and I am from the island of Oahu, born and raised Waimanalo. Hundreds of visitors drive through our town and come to our beaches daily. Having this fee can offset the environmental damage done by the volume of people that come to visit.

As a region, we face surmounting environmental challenges like disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

Recent public polling has found that 89% of Hawai'i voters agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 would do that for our environment. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Kalae Lopes

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 3:06:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex Filardo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Members of the Committee,

My name is Alex Filardo and I am an ocean conservationist who works with fishers to manage our coastal waters. Our coastal communities see the pressure that tourists have put on our reefs and environment and it is only fair to ask them to contribute to restoring and conserving them. The communities I work with rely on healthy coastal ecosystems for their livelihoods and do their part, it is time that visitors also do theirs. **Please pass SB304 without amendments.**

With aloha,

Alexander Filardo

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 3:33:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Heather Mohr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Heather Mohr and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State.

I am a 20 year resident on the island of Oahu and a farmer by trade running an educational and agtourism business called Keiki and Plow. Our mission is to inspire health, empower children and grow our community through sustainable agriculture. Our farm believes that our job is to not only grow food for our community but to grow a generation of keiki who grow up connected to their land, culture and food system. I see daily the many issues of sustainability our island faces. With depleted soils, eroding coastlines, our dependency on mainland supplies and an underinvestment in managing our finite resources I believe SB304 is a critical step in investing in our island homes.

As we look to other states and countries facing similar challenges we know that a green fee system not only contributes much needed financial resources where they are needed but also results in a more connected, educated and invested visitor. I believe that Hawaii is such a rich cultural and ecological treasure that our guests WANT TO DO BETTER if only they knew the issues our island homes were facing.

Furthermore, SB304 has over a 89% positivity rate with Hawaii locals- the people want and need a solution to protect our resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear

pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Heather Mohr

Executive Director and Lead Farmer, Keiki and Plow

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 3:41:37 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christopher Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Chris Lum and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State. As a natural resource manager with 8 years of experience in the field, I have experienced and seen the lack of funding in conservation result in the deterioration of natural areas and their associated native species. As you may know, Hawaii is home to a huge portion of the endangered species of America and the world. Many of the conservation laborers working on saving these species from the brink of extinction are also not faring well. Cost of living has driven otherwise passionate and dedicated conservationist to pursue other careers that provide a living wage. With additional funding generated from this bill, organizations could pursue paying employees better salaries, keeping precious institutional knowledge accrued over years in the field of conservation and ultimately, giving these endangered species a better chance at surviving.

As a region, we face surmounting environmental challenges like disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

Recent public polling has found that 89% of Hawai'i voters agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 would do that for our environment. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. It is extremely important that

SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Mahalo for your time in reading this message. It really is a race against time to save what makes our island's biology so special in this world. It would be a real shame to let it slip through our fingers if money was the only thing standing in the way of preserving Hawaii in its most natural state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Chris Lum

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 4:40:49 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Isidoro Rodriguez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is a common sense approach to protecting the beauty and vitality of Hawaii. Make it law.

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 7:38:46 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gerard Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

You will end up Chaseing away the Visitorss and the People of Hawaii will Have to Come Afture you in the Courts!!!!

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/27/2023 8:02:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rosemary Bearden	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Rosemary Bearden and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State. I have lived in North Hilo on Hawai'i Island for my entire life. As a student studying the impact of invasive species and human disturbance on native Hawaiian ecosystems, I can attest that more funding for programs such as these are direly needed in order to help our 'āina thrive.

As a region, we face surmounting environmental challenges like disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

Recent public polling has found that 89% of Hawai'i voters agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 would do that for our environment. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Thank you for listening and please pass this measure. The health of Hawai'i and our future depends on it.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Rosemary Bearden

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 2:35:49 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Crum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Having spent 30 years visiting these islands before living here for a dozen, I would gladly have paid a fee as a visitor, and would welcome the revenue as a resident, to help maintain the natural beauty of these islands. Mahalo for your support.

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 4:16:51 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daisha Garcia	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Daisha and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the state. As someone who is in the marine biology field and has studied and seen the impacts of the tourism industry, It is absolutely vital that this bill is passed. I currently live on the Island of Oahu and have worked close to the tourism industry for 4 years and have seen tourists coming in and out of Aloha Tower, The Waikiki Aquarium and Sea Life Park. Tourists add on to the economic state of Oahu but deplete the island of its natural resources. This bill will help with the state that Oahu is in as well as the other islands. Working with conservationists in the past has allowed me to see all that is being done and what can be done. This bill is one of the best solutions that can be implemented to the state of Hawai'i.

As a region, we face surmounting environmental challenges like disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

Recent public polling has found that 89% of Hawai'i voters agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 would do that for our environment. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion

of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Mahalo for your time and the opportunity to testify,

Daisha Garcia

Kevin L. Johnson, Ko Olina, Hawai'i

Hawai'i Legislature
House Committee on Finance
March 29, 2023, Conference Room 308, 3:00 p.m.

TO: The Honorable Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
RE: Support of SB304, SD2, HD2, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

Thank-you for this opportunity to offer testimony in **Support of SB304, SD2, HD2,**
Relating to Visitor Impact Fees.

As a resident of one of Oahu's resort communities I witness firsthand the important role of the visitor industry to our economy. Within that framework however, one must evaluate the benefit versus the harm of ever increasing tourists on our fragile ecosystem. Eventually we reach a tipping point at which increased usage of our natural resources is no longer sustainable without something to mitigate the damage.

Unrelenting pressure on infrastructure is also a cost of a tourist based economy. While this bill is not specifically designed to address roads, bridges, coastlines and the like, by dissuading some people from coming, it may have a side benefit of relieving some of this pressure. Anything we can do to balance tourist numbers with what our small islands can bear is a step in the right direction.

An impact fee may provide an important tool in this challenge. While we welcome our tourists with Aloha, we must likewise ask them to visit with Aloha. Part of that means paying their share towards maintenance of our beloved land. As outlined in the introduction of the bill, this is not an uncommon practice and has been "successfully implemented in many visitor destinations throughout the world."

In order to maintain the sustainability of our stature as one of the world's greatest destinations, I hope you too will **Support SB304, SD2, HD2.**

Sincerely,

Kevin L. Johnson

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 6:53:54 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Barbara Best	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Visitor fees will bring some balance to use and upkeep

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 8:29:40 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lorraine Waianuhea	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB304
House Committee on Water and Land

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe and Honorable Members of the Committee, My name is Lorraine Waianuhea and I am submitting written testimony in **strong support** of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State.

I am a resident of O‘ahu and have seen the destruction of Hawai‘i’s natural areas due to overuse and insufficient maintenance first hand. Damage to our trails, reefs and forests is not sustainable for residents or visitors, although I believe that visitors account for a large proportion of foot traffic and impact to these areas. As users of our natural resources, tourists should be required to give back to the management of those resources through a green fee program.

It has been found that 95% of Hawai‘i voters believe it is our kuleana to care for the ocean for future generations, and 89% agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them.

We currently face the extinctions of endangered species, disappearing coastlines, and dying coral reefs. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai‘i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources before it's too late.

This measure would provide a sustained funding source to enable our community groups, such as nonprofit organizations and DLNR, to implement solutions and scale work already being done to preserve Hawai‘i throughout the state. Currently, non-profits on O‘ahu such as Protect and Preserve Hawai‘i, 808 Cleanups, and Mālama Maunalua must in a way compete against each other for winning grants from the State, even though they all are mālama ‘āina organizations. A

green fee would not change this funding structure but it would greatly increase the amount of funding available and allow more non-profits to continue the important work they do for our community. The money from a green fee should also fund more permanent jobs in trail maintenance, so that trails in Hawai'i can be made safer to reduce the number of injuries, rescues, and deaths that occur.

I urge the committee to pass a visitor green fee program this session, in order to begin the needed restoration for our home as soon as possible.

There is undeniable support for a visitor green fee program by residents, and this is the year to implement a solution of this scale to make a difference for future generations. This bill is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,
Lorraine Waianuhe

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 9:00:10 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
lukanicole zavas	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB304

Aloha Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Luka, and I am submitting written testimony in **strong support** of SB304. This bill would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State.

I am blessed to have grown up under the loving gaze of the Ko‘olau’s, in the ‘ili of ‘Āhuimanu on the mokupuni of O‘ahu. The people that reside within these islands, ma uka to ma kai, such as the plants, birds, rocks, and humans, have guided me along my journey to understanding what is needed to care for them properly. The native species of Hawai‘i have an equal claim to prospering on these islands - their ancestral home. We are at a tipping point for many species and landscapes; unfortunately, those whose mission is to care for Hawai‘i face funding shortages and cannot achieve their goals.

It has been found that 95% of Hawai‘i voters believe it is our kuleana to care for the ocean for future generations, and 89% agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors pay their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including regions within State parks and outside of them. The funds raised from this fee will boost our ability to care for the wetlands that support the ‘alae ‘ula, ‘alae ke‘oke‘o, and ‘ae‘o. In addition, restore and enhance the native forests for the manu that live within their branches - such as the ‘i‘iwi, ‘ākohekohe, ‘elapaio, and ‘akikiki.

We currently face endangered species, disappearing coastlines, and dying coral reefs. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors pay their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai‘i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community relying on healthy oceans and forests to survive, we must implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources before it's too late.

This measure would provide a sustained funding source to enable our community groups, such as nonprofit organizations and DLNR, to implement solutions and scale work already being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. This fee would support the restoration and enhancement efforts of organizations caring for the homes of our manu 'āina. The Liveable Hawai'i Kai Hui, Kaiaulu 'o Kahalu'u, Ka Ulu a Kalana, and the Watershed Partnerships, to name a few. I urge the committee to pass a visitor green fee program this session, in order to begin the needed restoration for our home as soon as possible.

There is undeniable support for a visitor green fee program by residents, and this is the year to implement a solution of this scale to make a difference for future generations. This bill is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

We are at a tipping point. We must do something now to ramp up our conservation efforts - and the best way is to support those with an established pilina with the space. These communities need funding to hire hands, purchase equipment, and manage day-to-day expenses. Support passing SB304. Visitors to Hawai'i should kōkua in protecting Hawai'i, and the Green Fee is the best first step.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Lukanicole Zavas

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 9:04:48 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Virginia Tincher	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 SD2 HD2.

I was shocked by the lack of care from visitors when I visited Hanauma Bay a few years ago. The beach was full of debris from a recent ocean event that deposited debris on shore. Not a single visitor picked up even a couple of pieces of debris to put in the conveniently located track cans. I filled 2 boxes that I found among the debris and no one even looked at me or thanked me. The lack of respect for our island was glaring.

As a region, we face surmounting environmental challenges like disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

Recent public polling has found that 89% of Hawai'i voters agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 would do that for our environment. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. **I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Virginia Tincher, Oahu

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 9:23:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Catherine Kildall	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of the concept of SB304, that visitors pay for their impact on Hawaii's ecosystem. However, I have some concerns.

Most of our parks are in horrible condition. The bathrooms are disgusting. In many places there are homeless using the facilities as their personal space. There are places where you risk getting robbed. There is a huge problem with vandals destroying the facilities & sometimes it seems to take a long time for repairs to be done, if they are done at all. If you are going to charge additional fees for use of parks, they should, at a minimum, be clean & presentable, free of homeless, and most of all they should be safe.

My next concern is how enforcement will be done. It can't be a sticker on the bumper of cars as tourists use rental cars. Will everyone who uses the parks be asked to present their "park passport?" Will residents need to carry ID to prove they do not need a permit? What about part-time residents who may possess ID from another state? I see this as a little problematic & hate to see our parks being turned into a police state where all visitors are harassed over a \$50 fee. That would definitely not be Aloha.

if someone asked me to pay \$50 to visit parks & you get there & there's no toilet paper or soap & the doors are torn off the stalls in the bathroom, & there's homeless camped out using drugs & people get mugged while trying to eat their lunch on the beach, & maybe there's a tent city homeless encampment nearby & garbage all over the place.... I would want my money back!

if you visit parks in other states, the facilities are usually decent. Even in the back country. Isn't there another way to collect this fee? Hawaii should probably consider REDUCING OR GET RID OF income tax & add a sales tax so that everyone on the islands pays based on what they spend, instead of residents footing the bill. A small percentage of the millions & millions & millions of dollars spent by EVERYONE would most likely collect way more than the income tax collects. And then allocate a portion of that for conservation of our ecosystem.

Dear Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and honorable Committee Members,

My name is Sabrina Cohan. I am a seventeen year old student living in Honolulu, and I am writing to you today to express my strong support of SB304 and the inclusion of its grant program.

The visitor industry is a complicated and nuanced issue in Hawaii. On one hand, tourism supports our economy and allows many residents of our islands to prosper. People from around the world are able to experience the beauty of Hawaii, both through our natural spaces and our aloha spirit. However, on the other hand, the visitor industry is immeasurably detrimental to Hawaii's environment and native cultures. Visitors who may not have been raised with the same degree of respect for the environment as locals, and who may have received little to no education on the proper etiquette to use when in natural spaces, are allowed to ignorantly cause destruction to Hawaii's natural environment. Native Hawaiian cultural practices are appropriated and commercialized for profit, and few visitors leave the islands with a genuine understanding of Hawaii and her peoples.

I firmly believe that the visitor impact fee proposed in SB304 is a vital step towards remedying many of the problems surrounding the visitor industry in Hawaii. This fee would require visitors to give back to our islands in exchange for the benefits they are receiving from visiting our beautiful natural spaces. As residents, we try to do our fair share for our islands, whether that is through paying taxes, working in the community, stewarding the environment, or preserving Native Hawaiian traditions and histories. The visitor impact fee would be asking visitors to do the same, to pay their small part and allow us to care for our islands. Additionally, I believe that the visitor impact fee will prompt many visitors to think more deeply and critically about how they are affecting our islands, which may cause them to engage in other beneficial activities besides the fee's financial contribution, such as volunteer or cultural preservation work.

I believe that the visitor impact fee special fund that the bill proposes would have immeasurable benefits for environmental adaptation in Hawaii, providing a dedicated pool of money to be used for oft underfunded but vital programs and actions focused on protecting the environment. The financial needs of our environment have been ignored for too long, and the special fund and grant program created by this bill would address that injustice. I also ask that this committee maintains the bill's original requirement of the fee for all natural areas on our islands.

I have been raised in these islands, reaping the benefits of our beautiful home. I acknowledge how incredibly fortunate I am to have grown up in Honolulu, in a safe house in a beautiful land. I do my best to repay the debt I owe these islands, though advocating for the environment and educating other youth on how to make a difference in their own communities. All I request is that visitors to our islands be asked to do the same, to repay Hawaii's natural spaces and

communities for their hospitality with a small contribution to preserving these islands for future generations.

Sincerely,
Sabrina Cohan

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 10:14:01 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
alexis cabrera	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

hello,

I am in full support of sb304's passing. SB304 provides socioeconomic growth whilst simultaneously preserving the natural beauties of the environment which invites tourism as an economic asset to hawaiian government. This is also an easily applicable bill because at the onset of flight arrivals into hawaii, individuals are asked and screened for motivations for coming to hawaii, i.e tourism or residency. This separator will provide an easy ability to exercise sb304 state tax. Please protect the landscape and economic industry in hawaii by passing this bill.

alexis

Testimony in Support of SB304
House Committee on Finance

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Jack Kittinger, and I am testifying as an individual in strong support of SB304, which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to conserve and restore our precious natural and cultural resources.

Recent polling indicates that 95% of Hawai'i voters believe it is our kuleana to care for the ocean for future generations, and 89% agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources.

I have personally spear-headed an initiative focused on establishing a visitor green fee here in Hawai'i for more than 5 years. Working with a set of partners from the conservation and tourism sectors, we have assessed the key policy, legal, and financing elements for a Hawai'i-based visitor green fee program, helping inform proposals in this bill and others like it.

SB304 would establish a comprehensive visitor impact fee program that increases our conservation funding to offset visitor impacts and preserves our natural resources for future generations. Further, the bill can enable our resource managers in DLNR and other agencies, to work together with community leaders and nonprofit organizations, to scale the important work we must do to meet the challenges of our "twin" biodiversity and climate crises, saving our beaches, coral reefs, forests and other natural areas vital to our survival.

Through my work as a conservation professional for over 15 years, I've had the privilege to observe visitor green fee programs in other areas of the world. The success of these programs, including the support of the visitor themselves, is contingent on stakeholder engagement and transparency in order to foster trust and accountability. We must have a diverse set of stakeholders from relevant sectors benefiting from this program. **For this reason, I support the inclusion of a community grant-making program as part of this policy.** While DLNR plays the most important role in stewarding our resources, granting to frontline, community-based groups is a vital way to ensure that a broad constituency of stakeholders can use these funds for maximum impact in offsetting the impacts of visitors in their local geographies. Ensuring the inclusion of a community grant-making program will have the added benefit of creating green jobs in our communities.

I want to thank the committee for hearing this bill. The resources at stake are paramount to Hawai'i, and deeply intertwined with our way of life. This bill is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify, Dr. Jack Kittinger

Testimony in Support of SB304
House Committee on Finance

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Jovie Okamoto, and I am 15 years old. I am submitting testimony in strong support of SB304.

The visitor industry is a complicated and nuanced issue in Hawaii. On one hand, tourism supports our economy and allows many residents of our islands to prosper. People from around the world are able to experience the beauty of Hawaii's natural resources in our beaches, reefs, forests, mountains, indigenous species, and culture. But on the other hand, the visitor industry is immeasurably detrimental to Hawaii's environment and native cultures. Visitors who aren't raised with the same degree of respect for the environment as locals often receive little to no education on the proper etiquette to use when in natural spaces, causing great destruction to Hawaii's natural environment. Native Hawaiian cultural practices are appropriated and commercialized, and few visitors leave the islands with a genuine understanding of Hawaii and its peoples. **I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.**

I firmly believe that the visitor impact fee proposed in SB304 is a vital step towards remedying many of the problems surrounding the visitor industry in Hawaii. This fee would require visitors to give back to our islands in exchange for the benefits they are receiving from visiting our beautiful natural spaces. As residents, we try to do our fair share for our islands, whether that is through paying taxes, working in the community, stewarding the environment, or preserving Native Hawaiian traditions and histories. The visitor impact fee would only be asking visitors to do the same: to pay their small part and allow us to care for our islands so that they can be enjoyed for generations to come. Additionally, I believe that the visitor impact fee will prompt many visitors to think more deeply and critically about how they are affecting our islands, which could encourage them to engage in other beneficial activities besides the fee's financial contribution, such as volunteer or cultural preservation work. The visitor impact fee special fund that the bill proposes would provide great benefits for environmental adaptation in Hawaii, providing a dedicated pool of money to be used for the vital but often underfunded programs and actions focused on protecting the environment.

I have been raised in these islands, reaping the benefits of our beautiful home. I acknowledge how incredibly fortunate I am to have grown up in Honolulu, in a safe house in a beautiful land. I try my best to repay the debt I owe these islands through advocating for the environment and educating other youth on how to make a difference in their own communities. All I request is that visitors to our islands be asked to do the same: to repay Hawaii's natural spaces and communities for their hospitality with a small contribution that would go to preserving these islands for future generations.

Sincerely,
Jovie Okamoto

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 11:21:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Doorae Shin	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Doorae Shin and I am the community organizer for the Hawai'i Green Fee coalition. I am testifying in **strong support of SB304**.

After working with this coalition of organizations and community members for the last couple of years, it has become clear that now is the time for the Hawai'i Green Fee. We have the backing of the Governor, who campaigned on creating a visitor impact fee, and we have worked with dozens of community organizations, spoken to dozens of legislators, and polled the community about their support for this concept. The support is widespread and the need to act is urgent.

From natural disasters to coastal erosion and loss of biodiversity, Hawai'i needs to be prepared and work hard to restore, maintain, and preserve our natural and cultural resources. As one of the leading visitor destinations in the world, our special places, including our trails, beaches, parks, and more, need financial resources to ensure they are being taken care of and preserved for this and future generations.

We want to emphasize a few key points:

1. The green fee must be a broad-based one, going beyond just State Parks and across our islands to offset all visitor impact on our forests, reefs, trails, beaches, and more.
2. The grants program for community organizations is really important to keep in. While the State and DLNR manage a huge part of our natural resources, community organizations also play a significant role in offsetting visitor impact and protecting our environment.

I am happy to take questions about our efforts to pass the Hawai'i Green Fee, and we thank you for considering this bill.

Mahalo,
Doorae Shin

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 11:24:43 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren R. Kaiser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Lauren Kaiser, and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State. As a resident of Kaka‘ako and educator for the UH System, it is important to me that we protect and preserve our native ecosystems that encourages so many tourists to come visit our islands. Many of these resources provide habitats to species that are endemic to our islands and as an island community. We will also feel the impacts of not caring for our natural resources faster than other places so it is imperative that we take the time to protect them now.

As a region, we face surmounting environmental challenges like disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai‘i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

Recent public polling has found that 89% of Hawai‘i voters agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 would do that for our environment. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai‘i throughout the state. **I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.**

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear

pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Hawai'i has been a leader in green legislation and ecofriendly practices so let's continue to do so by passing SB304!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Lauren Kaiser

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 11:42:36 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Bernstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita and Members of the FIN Committee:

I'm writing in support of SB304. Please help visitors pay their fair share for using our State resources.

Respectfully,

Paul Bernstein

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 11:55:07 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miwa Tamanaha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for this opportunity to express my strong support for SB304.

Miwa Tamanaha

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 12:07:50 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Elizabeth Benyshek	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB304 SD2 HD2, which would establish a visitor impact fee program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources. It is vital that we protect our environment, and this fee would ensure that the beautiful places visitors are experiencing are maintained for years to come.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Elizabeth Benyshek

Chair, Surfrider Foundation O'ahu Chapter

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 12:12:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kate Reimann	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Our family wholehearted supports SB303, as do our our-of-state friends and family who visit us often--they have frequently vocalized their support of offsetting the physical cost their visits have on our islands in order to continue to enjoy its natural beauty, the reason for their travel in the first place! This is an excellent step in protecting our aina, educating our visiting populations, and preserving the natural beauty of these islands to be enjoyed for years. Our family is in full support of a Hawaii green fee! Please pass! Mahalo!

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 12:36:40 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
marina scott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

95% of Hawai'i voters believe it is our kuleana to care for the ocean for future generations, and 89% agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them.

**In Support of SB304
House Committee on Finance**

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

This testimony is in strong support of SB304 in order to establish a visitor green fee intended and designed to help keep Hawai'i's natural environment resilient and robust.

Reasoning for support: COVID was a terrible event for the world and our community, but one silver lining was witnessing how much our 'āina recovered – it was a testament to the unintended consequences of having so many visitors come to our islands. That is not an anti-tourism statement; Hawai'i has a lot to share with the world, and the tourism industry is good for our economy. But we can no longer continue to ignore this issue as doing so risks having our 'āina reach an environmental tipping point, such as has been seen in other popular destinations (e.g. Boracay Island), which can be extremely difficult and costly to remedy. We must take authentic, concrete steps to mitigate the environmental impact of our visitors. SB304 is a crucial step in that direction.

Regarding funding: SB304 is right to collect fees from visitors wherever or however it legally can. Nearly 50% of Hawai'i residents are ALICE or below – it is unfair to put further financial burden on those already struggling to live here. Considering that much of the environmental impact comes from visitors, charging a fee to said visitors is fair. Moreover, most visitors visit specifically to enjoy the natural beauty of our 'āina. A relatively small fee to ensure our 'āina stays pristine is something they're likely to be willing, perhaps even happy, to endure.

Regarding spending: To help ensure implementation is at scale, SB304 should go beyond only state agencies and distribute some funding to nonprofits and other community groups working both within and outside of state parks. If the bill is to be passed, it should be done right.

Regarding amendments: I have heard some objection to collecting fees from visitors of Native Hawaiian descent. I likewise would support an exemption for Native Hawaiians. After all, they are not "visiting" – this 'āina is their home, much more than anybody else.

Mahalo for taking my testimony into consideration!

- Sam Dorios

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 1:01:41 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ryan Dadds, PA-C	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Bill 304B making it mandattgat visitors to the island of O'ahu pay a green bill. Visitors make the biggest impact by harmong our environment with their reef damaging sunscreen, fuel use to fly here and while they are in the island and should pay for the damages.

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 1:14:28 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Chamberlain	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Lauren Chamberlain. I am submitting testimony in support of SB304. Hawaii NEEDS a visitor fee to alleviate the ecological burdens that tourism brings to the islands. Tourists come to Hawaii to experience the islands' natural beauty without any concern or responsibility for the impacts they have to the aina. The burden to conserve the islands should not only fall on locals and residents but must include visitors.

I have worked in marine conservation on Oahu for 7 years and have worked with a variety of marine conservation non-profits. I have seen firsthand how overworked and underfunded Hawaii's marine conservation nonprofits are. These organizations (i.e. Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project, Sustainable Coastlines Hawaii, Hawaii Marine Animal Response, 808 Cleanups, etc.) do incredibly important work towards the preservation and conservation of the island and its precious resources. With proper funding, these organizations can receive the resources they need to expand their invaluable work and pay their employees something close to a liveable wage. A visitor fee can greatly improve the impact of Hawaii's conservation efforts.

Please vote in support of a visitor fee that is robust and beyond the scope of state parks. We have so much work to do here that goes beyond our state parks.

Mahalo,

Lauren Chamberlain

Kailua, HI

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 1:18:03 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Geyer	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Please support SB304 SD2 HD2 which would help ensure visitors pay their fair share towards the impact they have on Hawai'i's environment. Enacting this bill would result in more money being kept in Hawai'i's economy, creating stable, good jobs, along with restoring and preserving the thing that most visitors come to Hawai'i to see, the beautiful parks and trails and natural ecosystems. This is why a visitor green fee is long overdue, and especially given the additional challenges that climate change is starting to present.

Mahalo,

Matthew Geyer

Hawai'i Environmental Change Agents

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 1:36:25 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Charlotte Frank	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Charlotte Frank and I support SB 304, relating to visitor impact fees. Our natural resources underpin our culture, our livelihoods, and our tourism sector but we severely underinvest in these arenas. We need to invest in more than 1% of our state budget each year to support "green infrastructure." We are an island state with limited resources and a carrying capacity. We cannot continue on the trajectory we are currently on. It is unsustainable and will collapse. With escalating visitor impacts, climate change and intensifying local threats to our ecosystems, there is an immediate need for conservation financing solutions in Hawai'i.

As a resident of Oahu who utilizes our natural resources and sees the impacts of climate change and tourism everyday, I strongly support SB 304.

Please pass this bill! Thank you.

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 1:51:47 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marina Miller	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Marina Miller and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural practices on every island. I was born in Oahu and live on Kauai. I am a grower and rely on local farmers and ranchers for my food source.

As a region, we face surmounting environmental challenges like disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

Recent public polling has found that 89% of Hawai'i voters agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 would do that for our environment. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Mahalo for your time and consideration,

Marina Miller

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 2:17:34 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Blickley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB304 to provide critical support and ongoing funding to our natural and cultural resources.

Kyle T. Yamashita, Chair
and the Committee on Finance

SB304

SD2 HD2

Wednesday, 03-29-23 3:00PM
in House conference room 308
via videoconference

Introduction

My name is Kelsea Wells.

Born and raised in

Hawaii

BA Psychology, UH Hilo

Current third-year

graduate student at UH Manoa

Myron B. Thompson School of

Social Work

Mother

Nature-lover; hiker,

snorkeler, bodysurfer

I am testifying in favor of SB304 SD2
HD2

Rationale

Creating a license requirement for accessing public beaches, trails, parks, and ecosystems is ethical and a great start for addressing current tourism concerns, which have changed following COVID and travel restrictions

Visitor impact fees can help to restore and prevent environmental degradation, both physically and with education as part of protective efforts

Last year:

State population: 1.44 million (Hawaii Census Data, 2022)

State visitors: 9.25 million (DBEDT, 2022)

The pressure on the natural environment laid by visitors greatly impacts residents, who depend on the land and water; this fee can help to offset this imbalance

The website or mobile application may hold great potential for future as this program evolves over time; it holds possibilities to establish realistic expectations and to connect visitors with accurate understandings of risks and safety, culture, and history

Tourism increases traffic, increases pollution, harms wildlife, and has created culturally insensitive climates and problems

Protection and restoration are needed; the native environments, wildlife, and people deserve it

The land is alive and it provides for us. Protecting the land and ocean is something for both residents and tourists to strive for. Conservation is key, and this bill provides an ethical and practical means of visitors giving back to the land that affords them such special experiences. This is why I support SB 304 SD2 HD2. Thank you.

The land that sustains us will always be worth protecting; it should be an honor for visitors to help protect the special place they long to make memories with

Kelsea Wells

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 2:34:44 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
wilfredo tungol	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita and members of the Finance Committee:

I am submitting this testimony in **strong support** of this green fee bill.

I have witnessed first hand the importance of keeping our environment safe and clean for our residents. I live in one of the more popular trails in leeward Oahu which at times is visited by up to 200 individuals during the week-end and holidays. Majority of the hikers are from out of state. The popularity of this trail exploded in the last 10 years due to social media. The DLNR has not have sufficient manpower to maintain the trail head. For example, the boot brush that was installed 5 years ago to fight Ohia disease has not been changed. Broken signs remain unrepaired for a long time.

There are two recommendations I would like to suggest: First is to make the fine for not having a visitor license fee effective one year from the passage of the bill. Five years is too long and visitors will just ignore any citations if they know it would not take effect until 5 years from passage of the act. HBV and the airline industry can ran public service ads informinhg the visitors of the visitor license fee requirement so they will be informed.

Second, expand the available pool of monitors to include hiring part-time students to monitor the trails and other sites during the week-ends and all week during the summer months. this will be a good way to put our local students to work in a very worthwhile cause while earning some money. The monitors can be issued T-shirts with DLNR logo and state ID to ensure that they are legitimate monitors.

We need to pass this bill if we are serious in protecting our treasure parks, trails and beaches. The \$50 annual fee is reasonable and can pass legal muster if the justification is to maintain the environment that the visitors are using. The National Park System has an annual pass that charge users of the national parks. Hawaii can do likewise.

Mahalo,

Wilfredo Tungol

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 2:37:32 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark Hixon	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. I urge support of SB304 because I believe (1) the challenges to implementing a tourist Green Fee are small relative to the benefits having such funding available to finally meet the many conservation needs in Hawaii, and (2) these funds will help Hawai'i's coral reefs, which have long been my research expertise as a professor of marine biology.

Regarding (1), green fees have been successfully implemented in other states and nations, so there is no reason this approach cannot be successful in Hawai'i with some effort and creativity.

Regarding (2), please consider the immense value of our reefs, their threatened status, and the value of the Green Fee in restoring our reefs (all statements back-up by peer-reviewed scientific publications):

- The ecological, economic, cultural, and recreational value of coral reefs in Hawai'i exceeds \$33 billion.
- A valuation assessment quantified the benefits of coral reefs at \$360 million per year for Hawai'i's economy.
- Oahu's coral reef status is considered "impaired," with the highest climate risk score and lowest fish score of the archipelagic assessment. Since Oahu is home to nearly 1 million residents and received six million visitors in 2019, the pressure of human density is disproportionately affecting corals and reef ecosystems compared to other islands.
- The primary threats to coral reefs in Hawai'i include ocean warming and acidification, as well as land-based pollution and coastal development, both of which are exacerbated by the tourism industry. Additionally, overfishing of fishes that eat seaweeds allows algae to overgrow corals.

Green Fee revenue would support reef conservation and restoration efforts. Without such substantial funding for conservation education and enforcement, I fear that we will lose our reefs. I urge you to pass this bill. Mahalo.

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 2:46:12 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
David Aquino	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is David Aquino and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State.

As a region, we face surmounting environmental challenges like disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai‘i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

Recent public polling has found that 89% of Hawai‘i voters agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 would do that for our environment. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai‘i throughout the state. I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai‘i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

-David

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 2:58:22 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lea Kaahaaina	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB304

House Committee on Finance

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Le‘a Ka‘aha‘aina and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State. **‘O Waimānalo, Ko‘olaupoko, O‘ahu ku‘u kulāiwi. I grew up in this ahupua‘a and currently reside here. Shifts in visitor desires and an increase in visitor numbers have brought an increase in impacts to our community, and those impacts affect more than just people. They extend to the more-than-human occupants of this place, those who call our coral reefs and forests home, the birds, plants, fish, and so many more. Here in Waimānalo, we see more and more visitors using our state parks to access the shoreline. I recently had a visitor stop me on my daily walk on the beach to tell me this was the most beautiful beach in Hawai‘i. Let’s protect and preserve these places for all to enjoy now and into the future.**

SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai‘i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Le'a Ka'aha'aina

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 3:50:16 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jeanne Herbert	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I strongly support SB304. It is time for Hawai'i residents and taxpayers to partner with our visitors to protect, restore and maintain our natural resources. Hawai'i is severely underfunded in natural resource management by at least \$350,000,000 - three hundred and fifty million dollars! SB304 will help raise funds to do important work that would otherwise go unfunded, and without SB304 natural resources would continue to be neglected. While our visitors enjoy our beaches, trails, parks, and oceans, up until now Hawai'i residents have been shouldering the costs. With over 10 million visitors in 2019 - and soon to reach or exceed that number - our resources are clearly strained with the sheer numbers of people wanting to experience our beautiful 'aina. Now is the time to kokua our 'aina by passing this bill. Mahalo, Jeanne Herbert

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 4:21:42 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ruta Jordans	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support!

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 5:35:18 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Stuart Coleman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Stuart Coleman, and I am writing in strong support of this bill to help restore and maintain our natural ecosystems through visitor impact fees. I have supported iterations of this bill for years, and I am glad to see it's finally moving toward being passed. Hawaii's ecosystems are our greatest treasure, and this bill would help preserve our natural resources for both visitors and locals alike. Mahalo for your support of this bill.

Aloha, Stuart

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 7:15:08 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leahi Hall	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB304

House Committee on Finance

Aloha Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Leahi Hall and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State. I live on Maui where we have a huge number of visitors enjoying our natural and cultural resources - a green fee would help empower funding to support the care and vitality of our precious resources.

SB304 is hugely important to ensuring visitors are exchanging and contributing their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time in Hawaii. Hawaii natural and cultural resources are in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. This is a chance to support our oceans and forests through SB304.

It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai'i throughout the state. I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

Mahalo nui for your work to protect, care for, and steward our natural and cultural resources for today and for the future,

Leahi Hall

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/28/2023 7:28:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Bret Mossman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha chair and members of the committee,

Please move this bill forward. As someone who works in aloha ‘āina everyday, we are in desperate need of additional funding to keep up with the demands on our resources. At the current level of investment we are losing what makes this place unique, this bill will help slow and reverse this trend.

Mahalo,

Bret Nainoa Mossman

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 12:03:56 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cards Pintor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill.

Mahalo nui,

Cards Pintor

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 7:35:57 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jacqueline Bosman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I feel that if there are impacts to our Aina even small and from the carefulest of visitors it doesnt hurt to have the monetary funds to put back into our state in appropraite ways, honoring the land and it's people. The funds should remain in use for exactly that-- restoring and combating any visitor disruptions.

Best,

Jacqueline

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 8:47:09 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Chamberlain	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Greetings Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Kitagawa and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Sgt. Matthew J. Chamberlain and I am submitting written testimony in strong support of SB304 which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources across the State.

As a region, we face surmounting environmental challenges like disappearing coastlines, bleached coral reefs, and an underinvestment in the management of these natural and cultural resources. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, including these resources. As an island region, Hawai‘i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. As a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources for future generations.

Recent public polling has found that 89% of Hawai‘i voters agree we must increase our investment in our lands, waters, wildlife, and natural and cultural resources. SB304 would do that for our environment. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here, which include regions within State parks and outside of them. It is extremely important that SB304 distributes a portion of funding to nonprofits and community groups as implementation partners to expand important work being done to preserve Hawai‘i throughout the state. I urge the committee to pass a robust visitor green fee program this session that funds both within and outside of state parks, as well as nonprofit organizations in addition to state agencies.

As elected leaders you have an opportunity this year to help pass a transformational bill into law for future generations. There is immense public support for this initiative, and SB304 is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai‘i for our local communities and the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Thank you for taking the time to read through this and your consideration. I believe that this Green Fee will help guarantee the health and environmental longevity of Hawaii.

Respectfully Sent,

Sgt. Matthew J. Chamberlain

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 9:07:08 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB304 SD2 HD2, which would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for state and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources. This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here.

As an island region, Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect our ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources. The impacts of tourists on our natural and cultural resources is undeniable. A recent local study confirmed that Hawai'i coral reefs attract visitors which then exacerbate their degradation. This is true for our other resources as well.

As the endangered species capital of the world, as an island with disappearing coastlines to sea level rise, and as a coastal community who relies on healthy oceans and forests to survive, it is imperative we implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources before it's too late.

This measure would generate the needed funding to meet our conservation, sustainability, and climate needs as a region, and provide a sustained funding source to enable our community groups, such as nonprofit organizations and DLNR, to implement solutions and scale work already being done to preserve Hawai'i.

The success of this program must include buy-in from tourists, residents, the tourism industry, and conservation experts, and is contingent upon effective outreach and transparency of the program. We must have a diverse set of stakeholders from relevant sectors contributing to the decision-making process for this level of funding. For this reason, I would like this measure to keep the Environmental Legacy Commission, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

I urge the committee to pass a visitor green fee program this session, in order to begin the needed restoration for our home as soon as possible.

SB-304-HD-2

Submitted on: 3/29/2023 9:49:41 AM

Testimony for FIN on 3/29/2023 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael McLaughlin	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a Florida resident, and a once and future tourist to Hawai'i, I thoroughly support this bill. Tourists like myself put incredible pressure on your land, and it should be our responsibility to pay for the stewardship of your 'aina. This \$50 fee, a minimal price to pay within the scope of a vacation trip to Hawai'i, is a good step in that direction.