

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SCOTT J. GLENN
DIRECTOR

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Statement of
SCOTT GLENN, Director

before the
SENATE COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS

Wednesday, February 22, 2023, 9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

in consideration of
SB 304, SD 1
RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

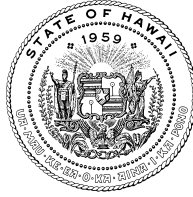
The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** SB 304, SD1, which establishes the Visitor Impact Fee Program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources, through which the department will collect a fee for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. Establishes, and appropriates moneys into and out of, the Visitor Impact Fee Special Fund.

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.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

9:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

In Support

S.B. No. 304, S.D. 1, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of the Governor supports S.B. No. 304, S.D. 1, 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. 1
February 22, 2023
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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. 1 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 this Committee 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 to benefit those who travel here and those who make Hawaii home.

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



Ke'ena Kuleana Ho'okipa O Hawai'i
Hawai'i Convention Center
1801 Kalākaua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815
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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
COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS

February 22, 2023
9:30 a.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL NO. 304 SD1
RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments in support of the intent of SB304 SD1, 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.

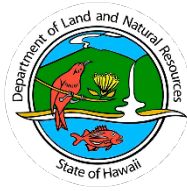
We have consistently been supportive of site-specific user fees as our preferred model, and we advocate the reinvestment of those collections into improving the experience for kama'āina and visitors alike at public parks and trails.

We support the intent of SB304 SD1. 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.

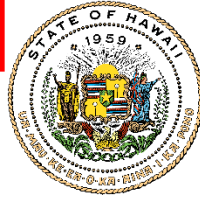
Mahalo for the opportunity to provide these comments.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



LATE



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

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

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

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
WAYS AND MEANS

Wednesday, February 22, 2023
9:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 211, Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 304, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

Senate Bill 304, Senate Draft 1 proposes to establish the Visitor Impact Fee Program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department), through which the department will collect a fee for a license to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. The measure will establish and appropriate moneys into and out of the Visitor Impact Fee Special Fund. **The Department appreciates all proposed green fee program measures and supports this measure.**

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.

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.

The establishment of a green fee is an important piece to closing the large gap between existing and needed funding for the management of Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources. Any green fee along with innovative financing mechanisms such as carbon offsets for reforestation, and improved forest, cultural sites, and marine management would move Hawai'i forward in addressing climate change and mitigating 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.

The Departments requests the following amendments:

1) In the final language, the Department respectfully requests that funds for new staff will be provided to the Department, outside of the Department's Executive Budget request, to ensure effective implementation of the visitor green fee program, such as two (2) FTE Program Specialists, one (1) Office Assistant, one Clerk V, and one (1) Accountant.

2) Project applications may be submitted by any state agency, county, and qualified nonprofit organization, and may propose to conduct activities on state lands and using natural resources in the public trust. The Department cautions that in some proposals, the cost and liability to the State could outweigh the benefits, and some project applicants may not have fully vetted their projects with all the affected departments that may have plans for certain lands and natural resources which serve another State priority. Therefore, the Department respectfully requests the addition of the following language in Hawaii Revised Statutes §171-G(c):

The department shall use best efforts to provide grant recipients with access to any state lands or natural resources necessary to effectuate the project for which the grant is awarded.

(Department proposed language to be added is bolded and underlined.)

3) To increase transparency in the process of project ranking, making recommendations to the Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR), and providing funding, the Department recommends 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 BLNR. The BLNR meetings are public and comply with the sunshine law ensuring that the public has the opportunity to

provide comments on the proposed projects and the volunteer commission's recommendations. This process will ensure informed decision making by the BLNR.

There are other proposed measures to create a visitor green fee program, and the Department welcomes the opportunity to work with the Legislature to incorporate helpful language from all measures.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure with suggested amendments.

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2023 9:45:47 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| laurel brier | Testifying for Kauai Climate Action Coalition | 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.



Aloha Members of the Committee,

My name is Arwen Revere and I am testifying on behalf of Wild Kids in strong support of SB 304 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. As a high school student, I am greatly concerned about the fate of our planet and what it means for future generations.

The impacts of tourism on our environment are undeniable. A recent local study confirmed that Hawai'i coral reefs attract visitors, exacerbating their degradation. To me, this proves that our natural resources and tourism sector are so greatly intertwined and depend on each other to thrive. 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 the endangered species capital of the world, as an island with disappearing coastlines to sea level rise, and as a coastal community that 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. **For example, Wild Kids could use potential funding to expand opportunities for students to become involved in conservation work as well as future develop projects relating to native plant restoration, upcycling, and invasive species removal.** 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.

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, comprised of members from diverse areas of expertise.

A visitor green fee program could provide methods to build environmental and economic resilience for our local communities. We believe that this green fee would be highly effective, as we have seen in other island communities such as Palau. Please invest in protecting our environment today, so we can ensure that residents and visitors are able to enjoy it for years to come.

Thank you for hearing our testimony,

Arwen Revere, on behalf of Wild Kids

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 305

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS, Visitor Impact Fee

BILL NUMBER: SB 304 SD 1

INTRODUCED BY: Senate Committees on Water & Land and Energy, Economic Development, & Tourism

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Establishes the 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, 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.

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 initial establishment of the commission, and for administration of the program, including the creation and implementation of a visitor impact fee strategic plan.
- (c) Grants to 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;
 - (3) Increase the resilience of state-owned natural resources trafficked by licensees; or
 - (4) Advance the State's ability to protect natural resources through the establishment, stability, and growth of an environmentally responsible workforce.
- (d) Grants to the counties up to 50% of the annual fee revenue. Priority will be given to projects that satisfy at least one of (c)(1)-(4).
- (e) Cost-matching funds for federal grants that satisfy at least one of (c)(1)-(4).
- (f) Enforcement of the impact fee license law.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2050.

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). And 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.

Re: SB 304 SD1

Page 3

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. 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: 2/19/2023



**Coalition Letter in Support of Hawai'i Green Fee
Committee on Ways and Means
Support of HB1162
February 20, 2023**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee,

The coalition of organizations and small businesses listed below are writing in strong support of SB304, 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.

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 funding to meet the immense challenges our environment faces, and offset the significant impact left by nearly 10 million visitors every single year. The impact of tourists on our natural and cultural resources is significant enough that **over two-thirds of Hawai'i voters support implementing a visitor green fee to fund the protection of natural and cultural resources.**

SB304 is a step of progress toward ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here. By investing in our environment today, we can ensure that residents and visitors are able to enjoy our incomparable natural environment for decades to come. SB304 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 to preserve Hawai'i.

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. **Hawai'i's total conservation funding gap has been estimated at \$360 million annually.** 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. 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.



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. **With an estimated 10 million visitors annually, a \$50 per visitor green fee could generate \$500 million in conservation revenue each year.**

The following green fee priorities will help our State offset visitor impact: scaling a green workforce to provide additional capacity toward conservation, protecting and restoring our marine and terrestrial resources, implementing nature-based solutions to adapt and mitigate against the increasing impact of the climate emergency, 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. Resources Legacy Fund
23. Malama Pupuokea-Waimea
24. Hawai'i Land Trust
25. Mālama Learning Center
26. Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project
27. Kuleana Coral Restoration
28. Zero Waste Hawai'i Island
29. Travel2Change
30. Mālama Maunaloa
31. Kailua Beach Adventures
32. Good Food Movement
33. Care About Climate
34. Protea Zero Waste Store
35. Kailua Beach Adventures
36. Agripelago
37. Native Ecosystem Services
38. Delphi Cinema
39. Keep it Simple Honolulu
40. North Shore Community Land Trust
41. Hawai'i Wildlife Fund
42. Kingdom Pathways
43. Kokonut Koalition
44. Excurinsure

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

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 11:09:04 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Charlie Quesnel | Testifying for Surfrider Maui Chapter | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Charlie 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. [Insert personal testimony including your name, what island/ area of the island you are from, why this issue is important to you, and why you took time to support this measure.]

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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. I have been a volunteer board member of the Surfrider Foundation - Maui Chapter for over 22 years, and see firsthand the impact of just how fragile our beautiful island environment is, and how it effects our relationship with our visitor industry, and what those visitors could potentially do to help in supporting for the future of island beauty by having/creating a vested interest in the sustainability of it with this Green Fee bill. 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,

**Charlie Quesnel, Treasurer
Maui Chapter**



2/22/2023

WAM Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

Position: Support SB304 SD1.

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, Hawaii region, is testifying in **strong support of SB304 SD1** (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 Hawaii's iconic natural resources. However, our islands are facing escalating visitor impacts, climate change, and localized threats to our ecosystems. Hawaii 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 Hawaii as a healthy, sustainable region for future generations to enjoy, as well as a visitor destination. A transformational investment in Hawaii'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 Hawaii'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 Hawaii 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 Hawaii](#), Conservation International, 2019

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.

February 20, 2023

Subject: Testimony in Support of SB304 SD1

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair

DATE: Wednesday, February 22, 2023 TIME: 9:30 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means:

My name is Chipper Wichman and I am a resident of Hā'ena Kauai 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 after working there since 1976.

I am testifying in strong support of SB 304 SD1 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. We also need a dedicated pool of funding to help Hawaii mitigate climate change and take action that will make us more resilient.

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 would feel the same way.

SD 304 SD1 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. Time is running out and we need to make serious investments now to protect our communities, and preserve our economic, ecological and cultural resources for future generations – the visitor “green fee” envisioned in SD 304 SD1 is logical want to help address these pressing challenges!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Chipper Wichman, Secretary
Hui Maka'āinana o Makana

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 6:48:49 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| John Leong | Testifying for Kupu | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Honorable members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 304 SD1. Kupu, Hawai'i's largest youth-focused conservation nonprofit, strongly supports efforts to better restore and maintain our environment and increase our food and energy self-sufficiency. We support SB 304 SD1 as one viable pathway to reduce our state's conservation deficit and otherwise care for our islands. Please pass SB 304 SD1.



February 22, 2023

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz
Chair, Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran
Vice Chair, Committee on Ways and Means

RE: Testimony in Support of SB 304, SD 1 Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Resources Legacy Fund (RLF), we are writing in support SB 304, SD1 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, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area.

Hawai'i residents overwhelmingly prioritize our collective responsibility to invest in Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources. The state has created programs, but to date failed to invest sufficient resources in collective priorities, such as protecting and restoring reefs, beaches, and forests, removing invasive species, and upgrading cesspools. Until now, the state has not 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, 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 effective implementation of priority programs.

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 the present and future generations, while creating jobs for Hawai'i residents.

SB 304, SD1 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, SD1.

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



SB 304, SD1, RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

FEBRUARY 22, 2023 · SENATE WAYS AND MEANS
COMMITTEE · CHAIR SEN. DONOVAN DELA CRUZ

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports SB 304, SD1, relating to visitor impact fees, which establishes the 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, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area; and establishes, and appropriates moneys into and out of, the Visitor Impact Fee Special Fund.

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 OCEAN CENTER

Our Mission: To foster understanding, wonder and respect for Hawaii's marine life.

02/20/2023

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

Dear Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

Position: Strongly Support SB304 SD1 with additional recommendations.

Total visitors to Hawaii from 2019 to 2022 were as follows:

| | |
|------|------------|
| 2019 | 10,424,995 |
| 2020 | 2,686,403 |
| 2021 | 6,797,760 |
| 2022 | 9,247,848 |

2023 most likely will exceed 2022 visitation count which will be the all time record visitation. The current proposal of \$50 environmental license for visitors to access Hawaii's beaches, forests, trails and recreational areas is valid for one year. Children are 15 years old are exempt. Many of the testifiers quote \$360mil annual conservation funding gap which is stated in the September 2021 Visitor Green Fee report to Hawai'i Tax Commission. So, let's examine this assumption more in detail. In that same report this model is projected to generate an annual revenue of \$372.6 mil in 2022. With the 2022 visitation of 9,247,848 we assume that we had about 20% children under 15 years old. That would leave us 7,398,278 visitors eligible to pay for this license. $\$372,600,000 / \$50 = 7,452,000$ visitors. With a margin of error on the under 15 years of olds estimation this implies that every eligible 15+ years old would purchase the license.

Yes, our natural and cultural resources are the attraction to majority of the visitors. Maui Ocean Center is a major attraction on Maui with the market penetration of about 17% which means that roughly every fifth visitor to Maui also visits Maui Ocean Center. Let's be generous and double that market penetration number to 34% for this license example. $7,452,000 * 0.34 * \$50 = \$126,684,000$. This would mean that we have an annual conservation funding deficit of \$233,316,000. Even if we double again the market penetration we only will have a revenue of \$253,368,000 annually. About \$100mil short of the goal.

It is clear that our community supports managed tourism model. This also includes Maui Ocean Center as what we have currently in place is not sustainable and it has a negative



192 Ma'alaea Road Wailuku, Hawai'i 96793 • mauiocceancenter.com • 808.270.7000

environmental and societal impact. Not only is this anecdotal but also data supported for example in the excessive nutrients effluent present in our near shore marine ecosystems correlating to visitor loads, or in inverse the lack thereof as we witnessed during the covid pandemic. As appealing as the words regenerative tourism sound I am not sure it will have a large enough coordinated impact to have a meaningful transformational change. Let's see.

The site specific impact fees make a lot of sense. Places like 'Īao Valley and Wai'anapanapa State Park here on Maui charge park specific entry fees. This is great and all the revenue from them should go directly to the local community and hiring local residents from the area and paying them career salaries to inspire each local community to be able to take care of their community and be inspired to share the stories of their community with the visitors.

General impact fee state wide should also be implemented and the revenue from that source should be dedicated to conservation, environmental, cultural and infrastructure only. This could be the quintessential public-private partnership model everyone talks about but remains more elusive. An environmental impact fee of \$125 per every visitor would have generated a revenue of \$ 1,155,981,000 in 2022. There are studies available globally that show a high degree of acceptance for the green fees in this range as creating goodwill towards the brand (in this case Hawaii) and I would expect a high degree of correlation with the Net Promoter Score (NPS). We need to operate from a place of strength; where else can one experience Hawaii. The challenge put forward pertains to the constitutionality of a visitor impact fee; specifically to the nexus between the impact caused by the visitors and applicable remedy. I would argue that we can establish a base line for example of the wastewater effluent and its impact to near shore marine ecosystems as we can calculate the nutrient loadings via TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Loading, 2010, EPA). Anything above that baseline denotes the nexus and thus validates the targeted environmental impact fee for the visitors. Recreational hunting case, "Baldwin v. Fish and Game Commission of Montana, 436 US 371 (1978) and The State of Hawaii vs. Medeiros Hanauma Bay may have some promise but only at a larger context covering the entire State of Hawaii environment. Regardless, either avenue would most likely take few years to come to fruition.

In the meanwhile as we work the above solution a voluntary donation system should be activated immediately along with carbon offset mechanism that the State of Hawaii manages with all the airlines allowing air travelers to offset their carbon imprint revenue coming directly to benefit this program. There has to be a sense of urgency and thinking big enough about this as nothing less will suffice.

Aloha,

Tapani Vuori
808.561.2022

**Testimony of The Nature Conservancy
Supporting SB 304 SD1, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees.**

**Committee on Ways and Means
February 22, 2023, 9:30 am
Conference Room 211 and via Videoconference**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Members of the Committee:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 304 SD1, 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 SD1 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, 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 annually.

Hawai'i's people and natural resources are being directly affected by climate change. We are experiencing increased flooding, coastal erosion, sea level rise, coral bleaching, loss of native forest, rising temperatures, increased threats of extinction for endangered species, and other impacts from the changing climate. DLNR and organizations like TNC are working to protect and restore our islands' critical natural resources. Additional funding is needed to maintain and increase the pace and scale of these conservation efforts to offset the growing impacts from climate change. The visitor impact fee and special fund established in SB 304 SD1 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 July 2020 poll of Hawai'i residents showed strong public support for an array of actions to make the islands more resilient, many of which could be supported by SB 304 SD1. Three-quarters or more supported restoring forest areas to reduce fire risk and provide water and wildlife habitat. Seven in ten support preventing the spread of invasive species, while two-thirds support restoring

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wetlands for flood protection. Majorities also support managing forests and soil to capture carbon, as well as preventing the spread of deadly diseases as the climate warms.¹

We also support the Environmental Legacy Commission established under the introduced version of the bill. It will provide important input from a wide variety of stakeholders in the visitor impact fee and fund, and transparency and accountability in how the funding is spent. We ask the Committee to consider adding these sections back into the legislation.

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 SD1.

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.

¹ Ward Research and Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) completed a survey of Hawai'i residents to assess their views on a range of environmental issues. From June 11-July 3, 2020, Ward Research completed 724 telephone interviews (on both landlines and cell phones) with randomly selected adults in Hawaii. The margin of sampling error for this memo 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. A memo summarizing poll results is available upon request.

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 9:12:12 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Ted Bohlen | Testifying for Climate Protectors Hawaii and Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Climate Protectors Hawaii and Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition STRONGLY SUPPORT



February 21 2023

Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Gilbert Keith-Aragan, Vice Chair
Committee on Ways and Means
Hawaii State Legislature

Comments on 304 SD1

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Aragan and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB304 SD1.

Overall, the Kohala Coast Resort Association is in support of the state collecting visitor impact fees for the 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.**

Fees of \$10 per car and \$5 per person have been collected at a number of Hawaii Island state parks for years. But unfortunately, those parks have not directly benefited directly from those fees. For example, Hapuna Beach State Park has been plagued by issues with its water lines, and there is currently no potable water for residents nor visitors, nor working restroom facilities. The "temporary" luas that have been put in place 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 Civil Beat that the County of Hawaii is helping with a temporary water solution over the next few months, but still believe it's appropriate to invest state resources in maintaining state facilities directly.

We believe that the Senate Committee on Ways and Means should take a deeper dive into the revenues and expenditures from **previously established visitor fee programs**. A dashboard on how all of the fees are being used should also be readily available and accessible to the public, so they can be apprised of the status of key projects, as it is often difficult to receive timely updates from impacted 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 are allocated across state services. We believe the \$40 million that our members paid into state and county TAT in 2022 should be appropriated to address visitor impacts, versus going into the state's general fund.

The Kohala Coast Resort Association's members employ 5,000 people, supporting 20,000 residents, at their hotels, timeshares, restaurants, retail shops, golf courses and spas along Hawaii Island's Kohala Coast. In 2022 alone, KCRA members paid \$40 million in state and county TAT, and \$40 million in state and county GET.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB304 SD1.

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



Mālama
Learning
Center

Mālama Learning Center is a non-profit organization based in West O'ahu. Our mission is to inspire communities to care for Hawai'i by perpetuating conservation, culture, and sustainability through education.

The Honorable Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair
The Honorable Senator Gilbert Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

LATE

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 304 SD1
Relating to Visitor Impact Fees**

Hearing Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2023, 9:30 am Conference room 211

To the Honorable Chairs, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members:

Aloha Kākou. My name is Pauline Sato and I serve as the Executive Director of the Mālama Learning Center, a private, non-profit environmental education organization serving schools and communities in West O'ahu. I am testifying in strong support of SB No. 304 SD1. This bill would help offset visitor impacts through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement actions that work to restore our natural and cultural resources, which visitors from across the world come to experience.

More than 10 year ago, I had the good fortune of visiting the Republic of Palau and was immediately impressed with their innovative version of a green fee. Visitors certainly did not hesitate to come because of a fee that was less than 5% of the cost of airfare alone. The green fee in Palau continues to help the government and non-profit organizations manage their natural and cultural resources – it is time that Hawai'i has its own green fee.

This measure is needed now as our natural and cultural resources bear the heavy weight of human impact – including that of visitors. Water use, waste generation, and energy consumption are undeniably connected to every visitor's stay, yet they are not asked to pay for the costs to manage and sustain resources at scales island-wide.

While the Department of Land & Natural Resources is the appropriate agency to administer this program, it is critical that the Environmental Legacy Commission, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise, be part of the decision-making process for use of funding by non-profit organizations. This ensures transparency and provides safeguards so that the important work of non-profit organizations that do critical work to protect and manage natural and cultural resources, sometimes at a fraction of what it would cost the government, is supported.

I urge your respective committees to pass this bill and thank you for the opportunity to testify. I am hopeful that this is the year that Hawai'i gets its own green fee!

Pauline M. Sato



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

LATE

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

Senate Committee on Ways & Means
Senate Bill 304, SD1
February 22, 2023

Chair Dela Cruz and members of the Committees, 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 been proponents for the establishment of impact fees at high-traffic sites that are especially impacted by visitors. Our position remains unchanged; we support impact fees that are collected at specific sites so long as the monies generated are used to maintain and improve the site at which they were collected.

HLTA supports the overarching intent of Senate Bill 304, SD1, and humbly requests the Committee's consideration of several possible amendments.

While we appreciate the language that indicates the collected monies will increase the resiliency of areas being visited by tourists, we feel that this should be a priority and the measure's language should reflect this. We ask that the Committees consider inserting language that makes clear that these monies will not be relegated to any general fund, their expenditure will have a clear nexus to tourism, and they will be used specifically at the site at which they are collected.

Additionally, with the elimination of the Environmental Legacy Commission in this current draft, we would request that additional language be inserted into the bill that would set forth a process for the local community and the private sector to provide input on necessary improvement projects that the Department of Land & Natural Resources may not have considered. This would create increased communication between the public and private sectors and give residents a means to have their concerns heard.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

HLTA supports Senate Bill 304, SD1.



LATE

TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND'S TESIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 304 SD1
Senate Committee on Ways & Means, State Capitol, Conf. Rm. 211
Wednesday, February 22, 2023, 9:30 a.m.

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

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members –

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Trust for Public Land (TPL) supports SB 304 SD1 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.

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](#).

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



Maui Hotel & Lodging
ASSOCIATION

LATE

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

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senate Bill 304 SD1: Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

February 22, 2023, 9:30 am
Conference Room 211

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 the latest version of Senate Bill 304 SD1**, which establishes the 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, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. Establishes, and appropriates moneys into and out of, the Visitor Impact Fee Special Fund.

MHLA favors 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.

MHLA appreciates the latest measure amendments deleting all references to the Environmental Legacy Commission and transferring all responsibilities and duties to the Department of Land and Natural Resources, where applicable.

For these reasons stated above, **MHLA supports Senate Bill 304, SD1.**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Testimony of Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i

2/21/2023

Bill: **SB 304**

Committee: WAM

Position: **Support w/Comments**

Hearing Date: 2/22/23 9:30 AM



LATE

Aloha Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Rafael Bergstrom, the Executive Director of Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i (SCH), a local nonprofit with a mission to inspire communities to care for coastlines. SCH is in strong support of SB 304 and the creation of a Visitor Green Fee. The vision of SCH is a world of inspired people, clean beaches, and healthy coastlines. Visitor engagement and education, volunteerism, and restoration efforts are all core actions of how we achieve our mission. Over the past 10 years SCH has removed 650,000 lbs. of debris from our coastlines, united 45,000 volunteers, educated 49,000 students, and waded through a destructive mess of plastic pollution. We are experts on plastic pollution, the consequences of inaction, and the solutions we have at our fingertips.

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.

SCH believes that the fee structure should involve an equitable disbursement of funds that offers opportunity for those doing incredible work in Hawai'i to enhance their efforts. This means that the traditional grants system needs to be broken down and realigned with a reality that most nonprofits are overwhelmed by a lack of capacity while doing their important work. Additionally, the minimum fund amount allocated to each nonprofit should be in alignment with a full-time salary and benefits at a level that is connected to the cost of living in this State. No nonprofit employee doing the work to protect this incredible place against the effects of visitors should be paid less than it costs to truly live here. For these reasons it is imperative that a green fee include a steering committee (currently described as the Environmental Legacy Commission) that is filled with current employees of the nonprofit sector who have a strong voice in determining the ways that funds can be equitably distributed. This step cannot be stressed enough if our goal is to make effective implementation a critical piece to the use of funds.

Models of similar fees have been effective across the globe and have great opportunity to create local jobs in protecting our islands for the future. Hawai'i is an ecological wonder and has a responsibility to have one of its biggest workforces be in conservation. In doing so, we will become a leader and model for the world.

We will continue to do our part with hands-in-the-sand and hands-in-the-soil work while engaging residents and visitors in opportunities to learn while restoring. Ideally everyone goes home from one of our events feeling empowered to take both individual and community action to protect our future. Mahalo for taking time to consider this important bill.

With Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael Bergstrom', written in a cursive style.

Rafael Bergstrom
Executive Director
Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/18/2023 12:35:01 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

An important step in supporting a more regenerative tourism industry. We must safeguard our natural resources and all who enjoy them (except Native Hawaiians) should contribute.

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 7:56:05 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Alana Reis | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Visitor Fee Needed Now

Testimony in Support of SB304

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Alana Reis from Kailua, ko‘olaupoko, O‘ahu. 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. Protecting these wahi pana and beloved spaces and the creatures that rely on those spaces is of utmost importance to me and many in my community.

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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.

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.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Mahalo for your work and dedication to doing what is best for Hawai'i.

Alana Reis

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 8:18:01 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Caitlin Richman | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB304

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Caitlin Richman 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. I, Caitlin Richman have been visiting the islands with my partner Christopher for years now, both as WWOOF'ers and as tourists. We have seen first hand the impact that unethical tourism has had on the islands, we would have gladly paid a green fee to help boost the restoration and preservation of these magnificent places. Would've loved to know that my visit was further offset in impact by giving back in a very small way, barely noticeable in monies. We'll happily pay over \$50 for a single meal, there is absolutely no excusable reason that a \$50 visit fee should be waiting this long for approval. None. I'm furious for these poor folks, that they have to jump through all these hoops, to get pushback from non-native elected leaders.

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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. 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.

Again, we would happily support conservation efforts in Hawai'i, our favorite place in the world. We hope and pray for swift action on your parts to finally get this done- I've watched from Vermont for YEARS, the beautiful peoples of Hawai'i struggle between land, food, water and air quality security. Take a look around you and ask yourselves why in the heck you would belabor such a monumental effort, further escalating the crisis' that will only continue to get worse if something isn't achieved quickly. If you want tourists to have a place to spend their money, the place has to still exist!! We owe this small gesture and SO much more to the native Hawai'ian communities, this is a no brainer.

The biggest insult we could bestow upon these peoples is to continue delaying efforts to the establishment of a Green Fee and continue exploiting them and their lands and resources. Mahalo Nui Loa for passing this Fee and making their fight a little easier.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Caitlin Richman

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 8:28:38 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Chrisjgabriel | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB304

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Chris gabriel 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.

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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. 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,

Chris gabriel

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 8:49:50 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Legislative Leadership,

My name is Alex Filardo and I am a fisher who works alongside coastal community members to protect our oceans and those that depend on them. For many years, I've heard the frustrations from residents about the impacts tourists leave on our coastal ecosystems - including reefs, protected species, and mismanaged waste. I am testifying in strong support of SB304 so that tourists can help contribute to protected these resources into the future. The grant program could empower organizations and community groups to offset impacts across the State, and help solve much of the negative resident sentiment towards tourism.

Mahalo for hearing my testimony.

Alex Filardo

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 9:08:15 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

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.

I've seen first hand how effective a green fee can be. When our family visited the Galapagos Islands, we paid \$100 each as a green fee and saw first hand how much can be done to preserve and protect. It is an amazing place to experience. The land and animals were protected and local residents were trained as guides. We learned it wasn't always this way. It took government commitment and contributions from visitors to build a strong culture of preservation and care and a protected environment.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Virginia Tincher

Aina Haina, Oahu

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 10:57:44 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

I support SB304 SD1, 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.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Decision-Making on Feb. 22, 2023 at 9:30 am

SUPPORTING SB 304 SD 1

My name is John Kawamoto, and I support SB 304 SD 1.

A total of 10.4 million visitors came to Hawaii in 2019, before Covid, most of them drawn to Hawaii's natural beauty. That number declined, but is now moving up toward it, and is projected to exceed it in a few years. Many visitors use Hawaii's natural and cultural resources, such as beaches, parks, and trails.

This bill generates funds to help maintain Hawaii's natural and cultural resources by assessing a fee on visitors for a license that they would need to use these resources. It is a sensible way to help pay for the preservation and maintenance of these resources.

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 1:00:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| kalen Fleming | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I support sb304

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 1:20:04 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Dyson Chee | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Dyson Chee 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.

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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. 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,

Dyson Chee

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 1:36:50 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Gordon E Hammond | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha - please know that I am fully in support of this bill. We need to take a 10, 20, to 30 year view of the problem and opportunity to create a process that can enhance and save our precious islands from neglect and harm. This bill will start the state on the right direction. Failure to pass this bill will harm not only our children but the future of Hawaii's economic engine ... Tourism.

Once the bill is passed, I suggest the state should create a "Youth Conservation Program" and hire local high school students to both work and be ambassadors of the program.

Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Gordon E. Hammond

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 2:36:03 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Kimberly De Souza 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.

I previously resided on O’ahu for 11 years before relocating to my current home on Hawai’i island in 2021. Over the past decade, I have witnessed thousands of visitors arriving on airplanes and cruise ships; these visitors are here to enjoy the natural beauty that is Hawai’i nei.

Unfortunately and often unintendedly these visitors leave a lasting negative impact on the islands. These impacts have taken a toll on the environment and communities, this includes the unintentional spread of invasive species, the wear on hiking trails, or damage to live coral reefs - just to name a few. Previously, non profits would try to mitigate these impacts, however, with increasing visitor numbers but no increase in restoration/conservation funding, these non profits face an uphill battle.

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. 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.

On top of that, as the endangered species and extinction capital of the world, 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.

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.

Thank you for considering my testimony for this is an extremely important and pivotal bill that desperately needs to pass.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Kimberly De Souza

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 2:39:33 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Mark Frazer | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Mark Frazer 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.

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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.

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,

Mark Frazer

**Testimony in Support of SB304
Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Kano Watanabe 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. **I am from upcountry Maui, and have seen extreme changes in the health of our natural environments due to the impact of tourism—native reefs, forests, and animals have suffered from the lack of awareness of our visitors. I believe that visitors to our islands should be just as concerned and aware of the health of our sensitive ecosystems and natural habitats as the local community, so as to not undo all the work that our environment protecting committees, volunteers, and supporters put so much effort into. If tourists want to continue visiting Hawai'i because of its natural beauty, they must also do the work to help protect it.**

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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. **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 taking the time to listen to kama'aina. When it comes to the health of these islands, it should not only concern local communities who depend on it, but those who temporarily take advantage of it without giving back.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,
Kano Watanabe

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 2:53:18 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Selene Mersereau | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Please support this bill

Thsnk you - Selene - Kailua

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 3:03:44 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Kelsey Hesapene | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

I am a born and raised Kauai small farmer looking too build a sustainable local lifestyle and business along with future employment opportunities and entrepreneurship. Medical is a big key in our lives now days. This will be a big tool towards our sustainability of ourselves and our local community. Mahalo.

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 4:46:14 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Brian Tucker | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Brian Tucker, I am a resident of the Puna district on Hawai'i Island. I am submitting this written testimony in strong support of SB304 to enact a visitor green fee program. This program will provide much necessary funding to implement our very underfunded natural and cultural resources across the state. Every dollar can go a long way towards providing our state the necessary funds to hire people and fund organizations that are committed towards conserving and preserving our precious and vulnerable natural and cultural resources. Yes there is a lot of good work being done, but for every project that receives funding and resources, there are several potential projects that aren't able to be considered due to a lack of funds. From fencing and ungulate removal to restoration activities, we do not provide enough funding to do all the important work that is so crucial for our fragile ecosystems and fleeting history. This bill will help inject much needed funding into our state natural and cultural resources management. And as a reminder, these visitor green fees should be in addition to the millions of dollars annually that the state allocates to natural and cultural resources management, so we can create good jobs to provide the necessary personnel to complete the huge tasks at end of supporting the land and the history. Mahalo for your consideration and care for our state natural and cultural resources.

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 5:01:56 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Sandy Ward | Testifying for Hui o Ho`ohonua 501(c)3 | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Dear Senators of the Ways and Means Committee,

I am writing in support of SB304 and urge you to pass this bill. With minimal impact on visitors, the green fee is a viable way to provide much needed funding for the much needed work involved in restoring our state's natural resources.

As a community non-profit working to restore abundance to Pu`uloa - Pearl Harbor - we see that the state DLNR does not have the resources to manage the 8 watersheds that feed into this once abundant estuary. Our food and water security depends on securing additional and sustainable funding streams for this vital work.

I work with hundreds of students who come to our site every week to work and learn as they restore the Honouliuli watershed on the shores of Pearl Harbor. I want to be able to tell them that our state legislators are doing everything they can to balance the impacts of tourism with the need to protect our state's natural resources for future generations - as our state constitution mandates.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Sandy Ward

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 5:54:27 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Jeremy pauli | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Jeremy Pauli 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. I'm not from Hawai'i but I have been traveling there every year for the past 10 years. When I visit Hawai'i it saddens me how few tourists treat Hawai'i with respect and even fewer know anything about Hawaiian culture. The aina and makai of Hawai'i are in desperate need of help and this bill would give resources to protect, maintain and rehabilitate the unique and wonderful endemic ecosystem of Hawai'i.

Hawai'i faces significant pressure from visitors on and those impacts are taking a toll on its environment and communities. SB304 is a critical step to ensuring we visitors are paying our fair share for the places we use, visit, and experience during our time in Hawai'i. As an island region, Hawai'i is in immediate need of additional resources to conserve and protect unique ecosystems, native species, coastlines, and the community livelihoods that depend on these resources.

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 to implement a visitor green fee program this year to protect these resources before it's too late. This measure would generate the much needed funding to meet conservation, sustainability, and climate needs as a region, and provide a sustained funding source to enable community groups, such as nonprofit organizations and DLNR, to implement solutions and scale work already being done to preserve Hawai'i. Maui Forest Bird Recovery Project, Maui Nui Seabirds, Auwahi Reforestation Project, Save Our Shearwaters, Kauai Forest Bird Recovery Project, Archipelago Research and Conservation, Pacific Rim Conservation, The Malama Learning Center, Hawai'i Wildlife Center and Kuleana Coral Reefs, are just some of the incredible organizations filled with dedicated individuals working to restore the environment of

Hawai'i. They and more are all in need of increased funding due to the mountainous tasks they face. I urge the committee to pass a visitor green fee program this session, in order to begin the needed restoration for Hawai'i 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 local communities and the visitors like me, for future generations and beyond.

Please, Hawai'i needs you. The aina needs you. From mauka to makai the ecosystem of Hawai'i is running out of time. Please pass this bill.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Jeremy D Pauli

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 6:18:31 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Caroline Azelski | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

In support of SD1. Thank you.

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 6:26:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Tricia Dang | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

I support this bill for all the reasons stated. This has been a long time coming and we cannot wait any longer to put this fee into action. Hawaii and our natural environment need the funds to support improvements, mitigate damage, and educated visitors.

My only concern is people's willingness to pay the fixes \$50/year using an honor system. If this was created to model the federal parks annual visitor pass, the federal parks provide THE OPTION to pay a daily rate (lower cost) or the annual pass rate (higher cost). To state in section 171-c a flat, no option rate of \$50 means that the majority of people will shake their head and move on, continuing on with their hike or park visit and NOT PAY... meaning the Hawaii does not receive the revenue that the financial models estimate and we are all wasting our time.

RATHER, modify the financial commitment: (1) create 2 fee options - a daily visitor or annual visitor; capturing the individuals who would otherwise not pay \$50 unless it was enforced or prevented access, or (2) allow BLNR the option to modify the pay structure in a way that allows them to achieve the present value that was used to determine the flat \$50 rate!! Stating a flat \$50 fee without the space to be flexible in how that is achieved is problematic and should not be the starting point.

If you want to charge \$50, this has to be collected upon arrival....AT THE AIRPORT, so visitors have no choice, which is what they do in many areas such as Peru and Cambodia.

Thank you for your time. Fingers crossed, Hawaii.

Tricia Dang

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 7:17:57 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Aubrey Yee | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

The visitor green fees make sense. This idea has been successfully tested in other places (Palau). We have the chance to be a leader for the country. Our natural and cultural resources are the backbone of the visitor industry.

- Green fee models and environmental licenses are successfully used at visitor destinations across the world.
- Green fee funding could provide thousands of sustainable jobs to our communities and support livelihoods in the visitor economy.
- We currently face a \$360 million/year conservation funding gap, and Hawaii is already experiencing the impacts of the climate emergency.
- Hawaii only invests \$9/tourist back into our environment and less than 1% of our state budget goes to conservation.
- Studies demonstrate that visitors and residents both overwhelmingly support the implementation of a green fee.

Make the step towards a future we can be proud of.

with aloha,

Aubrey Yee

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 7:56:11 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Breanne Fong | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Breanne Fong, 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. **I was born and raised on O'ahu in Niu Valley and Kaimuki, currently residing in Kaimuki and I am supporting SB304 because Hawai'i's environment has been neglected for far too long, especially with the increase in tourism now that restrictions from the pandemic have decreased. I am currently a master's student at UH Mānoa in the Natural Resources and Environmental Management program and it's because of my strong relationship with this 'āina and kai I grew up on that I have pursued environmental stewardship as the focus of my career. Thus, I no longer want to see Hawai'i become more degraded than it already is and SB304 will allow visitors to help prevent that from happening.**

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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. **I volunteer with multiple environmental nonprofits, such as 808 Cleanups, Ho'oulu 'Āina, and Protect & Preserve Hawai'i, all of which are committed to restoring Hawai'i's natural and cultural resources. Thus, 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.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Breanne Fong

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 8:47:02 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| celia tapp | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Thank you for considering testimony. This small fee could make a big impact on preserving the flora, fauna, and culture of Hawaii. I am in strong support!

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/20/2023 9:15:53 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Doorae Shin | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha,

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

We are now facing impacts of the climate crisis, where Hawai'i's ecosystems, economy, and communities face severe vulnerabilities. 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.

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

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, 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.

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. 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.

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-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 3:06:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Alex Wong | Testifying for Kauai Farm Planning | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha e State of Hawaii Senators,

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.

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.

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 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 or Central or South America where the imported food originated. 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.

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

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 6:32:28 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|-------------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Isabella Feldmann | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Isabella Feldmann 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. The island of Hawaii is not only home to many native species, but home to natives living here for hundreds of years prior to white colonization and overthrowing. Being able to experience the aloha nature of Hawaii and the tranquility that is apart of it is mainly due to the beauty and nature of the islands. Having been to Oahu, Maui, and Hawaii, there is nothing that compares anywhere else to the beauty, but sadly there is not where that compares to the destruction of these islands. The tourists that are coming are not protecting the island and are using the energy and resources and depleting every island of her beauty. They are running not only the natives out of their homes but a lot of the native marine flora and fauna that is essential to the ecosystem. Without the marine presence the island would collapse as for it is essential to many people's beings. I have dedicated my life to marine conservation and research to help protect from destruction and removal of a lot of the marine life and essence of the island. This green fee is something that would drastically help the island and shows no downside. To those who respect the island they would be more than happy to pay the fee, and those who do not are still going to be held accountable to the destruction that they cause and have to pay to recoup their destruction. I cannot imagine a world where the aloha spirit is stripped from Hawaii completely but I fear it is encroaching upon us rapidly and this measure will aid in the slowing and restoration of that. I took my time to support this bill as someone who has already dedicated their life to research and conservation and I would do it a thousand times over.

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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. There are many organizations that are trying to aid the community of hawaii and conduct research to monitor the species around the island. Specifically Uncharted Hawaii is an organization I have supported for a while, they are a whale shark research group tracking the population of whale sharks in hawaii which went unnoticed for a while and making sure that future research is going in the direction of looking at the biotoxins in the oceans effects on marine species like the whale shark that thrive of primary producers that are the first degree to absorb these toxins. 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 allowing community testification, the importance of this measure being passed cannot be described in words. We need to see protection of this island that has been ripped from native care hundreds of years ago, and we need to bring back the native love of the island.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Isabella Feldmann

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 7:00:36 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Brittany | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB304

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Brittany Rose 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. This is extremely important to make sure the islands are here for many more generations to come. There is no place on earth as beautiful as the Hawaiian islands and EVERYTHING that can be done to help and protect the islands, the wildlife that depends and the natives as well. So many other frequently visited places also have visitor fees and are proof this works!

For me, the islands are heaven on earth. My connection and the islands energy goes so deep to my core I can feel it with every heartbeat. I know this is true for so many.. so we must protect as much as we can. We as human beings must do our part and give back to what has so easily been given to us and asks for nothing in return. This is our responsibility!

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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. 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.

Thank you for opening eyes and understanding why this is so important and so much needed!

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Brittany Rose

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 7:12:59 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Tawn Keeney | Individual | Oppose | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Testimony on SB304 SD1 before the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

SB304 SD1 should be **rejected** considering the arguments as follows:

The foremost concern is that this bill utilizes the concept of Green Fee or Visitor Impact Fee in a manner that is inconsequential relative to the profound impact that visitation here has upon our environment, by virtue of global warming emissions from air transport of visitors to Hawaii. By targeting our attention and remediation toward visitor impacts on our parks and beaches, trails, etc. we are distracting our attention from understanding that air transport of visitors here accounts for warming somewhere between 1x and 2x the total of all domestic greenhouse gas emissions in the State of Hawaii (excluding aviation). Rephrased, visitors, in coming here, are responsible for a greater degree of global warming than all of Hawaii’s domestic population. It therefore can be reasonably argued that visitors, more than Hawaii’s own populace, should share in the anticipated costs of adaptation to the impacts of Climate Change. These costs will be measures in many tens, if not hundreds, of **billions** of dollars. To be speaking of the impacts of visitors on our parks and trails and beaches is of no significance. However HB1162 or HB442 will claim the one mechanism available to demand visitor’s participation in our climate change adaptation expenditures, the Green Fee, and divert it toward an insignificant (in comparison) problem.

Let’s digress. In 2020 I wrote a white paper which was presented to the Honolulu Climate Change Commission on greenhouse gas emissions from air transport of visitors to Hawaii. The findings were that emissions from visitor air transport accounted for 1-1/2x all of Hawaii’s domestic GHG emissions - 18 million tons CO2(e) compared to Hawaii's total net domestic emissions at 13.6 million tons. This calculation utilized Hawaii Tourism Authority's reported number of visitors from each of eight global ‘regions of origin’ of visitors, and assigned an airport representative of each region. It used a GHG Calculator which came closest to the average of eight aviation GHG calculators found on internet Carbon Offset websites. Climate Scientist Charles Fletcher used the phrase “incredibly important data” in commenting on the paper to the Commission. It was recommended to be presented to the State Climate Commission. Subsequently Makena Coffman, Director for the Institute for Sustainability, UHERO Research Fellow & Professor of Urban and Regional Planning elegantly calculated, using the State Greenhouse Gas Inventory, visitor air transport emissions at **equal to** all Hawaii’s net domestic emissions at 13.5 million tons CO2(e). The limitation of this State Inventory method is that it did not include any connecting flights, only the ‘leg’ into, and from, the Hawaii

airport. (All Hawaii's ground transportation is reported by the Inventory at 4 million tons CO₂(e) and all electricity generation at 8 million tons.)

Subsequently the IPCC, in its 6th Assessment Report (Code Red for Humanity), endorsed as best science a method for calculation of global warming from aviation emissions. Utilizing this method would transform my calculation of warming from visitor air transport to 2x that of all Hawaii's domestic emissions, and Dr. Coffman's calculation to 1-1/2x (without connecting flights).

The impact of visitors on our parks and beaches becomes trivial. It is the global warming impact of visitor air travel emissions that any Green Fee must account for. It is this cost of retreat from the coastlines and restoring our built environment from this impact (unless one might think the cost of climate change will be immeasurable) that visitors should be commensurately responsible for. Do not waste the mechanism of Green Fee in the trivial manner represented by this bill.

The Green Fee which I propose is a fee of \$20 per night attached to the Transient Accommodations Tax for each visitor. Thus, for a 10 night stay, a \$200 fee. The HTA states that the average visitor spends \$1800 on their trip to Hawaii. Few will be dissuaded from coming by this fee. However, each year or two the amount of this nightly fee will be increased or decreased by up to \$5/night after assessment by the 20 member, high level, State Climate Commission (both legislative and executive branch membership). The HTA has endorsed strategy for decreasing the numbers of 'low-budget' travelers. A progressive fee increase would accomplish that plan and at the same time realize high revenues. Eventual 'trade-off' would be carefully considered by the Commission.

Do not waste the sole mechanism, Green Fee, for engaging visitor participation in the anticipated immense costs of climate adaptation, which more than ourselves, they are responsible for by air travel here. Do not support HB1162 as is, but rather reconstruct the concept of Green Fee as described above. This bill, as is, does great damage to the potential of 'green fee'. If this bill is to be passed it must be amended such that each year or two the State Climate Commission will reconsider and make recommendations of the amount of green fee to be charged to visitors.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Tawn Keeney MD

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 7:54:38 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|--------------|--------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| Gab Bri | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Gabrielle 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. **As a local girl born and raised on the west side of Oahu, I am submitting my testimony to ensure that our natural resources are protected. Assigning a fee to tourists will not only aid in the negative effects of the tourism industrial complex but also require a contribution of funds to go back into protections by local groups.**

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 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. I personally work at a local credit union who makes efforts throughout the year to organize community beach clean ups, beautifications of our schools and other support efforts. **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.

It is extremely important to the community to impose this fee on tourists.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Gab Bri

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 9:31:02 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Elijah Ebert | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB304

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Elijah Ebert 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. I am a resident here on the North Shore of Oahu and spend significant time in and around the ocean. I see a desperate need for help. We as stewards over the land have the chance to provide this needed care and assistance.

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 resilience of our home, the reef, mountains, and ecosystems here is amazing. I urge the committee to pass a visitor green fee program this session, in order to begin the needed restoration and recuperation 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.

Thank you very much for considering this bill. I can think of nothing more important than preserving the environment in which we live for future generations. We as residents of Hawaii, regardless of our ancestral roots, owe it to our children and their children to be good stewards of the land upon which we live.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Elijah Ebert

LATE

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 10:05:25 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Catherine Orlans | Individual | Oppose | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Oppose bill as is. If bill is amended to protect Native Hawaiian rights as visitors, I would support. Under Hawai'i law, the State and its agencies are obligated to preserve and protect the exercise of traditional and customary Native Hawaiian rights. Hawai'i courts have made clear that traditional and customary practices for subsistence, cultural, and religious purposes "must be protected to the extent feasible" under the Hawai'i Constitution. This would include protecting all native hawaiian's rights to free access to state owned natural resources. Native Hawaiian visitors also deserve an exemption to this green fee.

LATE

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 10:52:41 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Melissa Barker | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Honorable Member,

I respectfully ask that support SB304 SD1.

Thank you for your attnetion and consideration.

Melissa Barker

Kapaa, HI

**Testimony in Support of SB304
Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran 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.

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, creates green jobs in our communities, 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.

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 contributing to the decision-making process for this level of funding. **For this reason, I support the bill's inclusion of the Environmental Legacy Commission, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.** While DLNR may alone hold the decision-making roles for the disbursement of visitor impact funding - with appropriate oversight from the legislature and executive branch - the Commission is a vital way to ensure that a broad constituency of voices help shape how this funding is deployed, for maximum impact. The legislature can put in place the right governance mechanisms for the Commission to ensure it functions in the most appropriate way, as an advisory group. I articulated this in a recent op-ed in Civil Beat:

<https://www.civilbeat.org/2023/02/green-fee-an-opportunity-to-invest-in-what-matters-most/>

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

LATE

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 11:46:38 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

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

Comments:

Aloha. I urge support of SB304 because I believe it will help Hawaii's coral reefs, which have long been my research expertise as a professor of marine biology. Please consider the immense value of our reefs, their threatened status, and the value of the Green Fee in restoring our reefs:

- The ecological, economic, cultural, and recreational value of coral reefs in Hawaii exceeds \$33 billion (NOAA commissioned study).
- A valuation assessment quantified the benefits of coral reefs at \$360 million per year for Hawaii's economy (Cesar and Beukering, 2004).
- According to a status report published by NOAA, Oahu's coral condition is considered "impaired," with the highest climate risk score and lowest fish score of the archipelagic assessment (Coral Reef Condition Report, 2018). Since Oahu is home to nearly 1 million residents and received six million visitors in 2019, the pressure of human density is disproportionately impacting 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, coastal development, both of which are exacerbated by the tourism industry.

Green Fee revenue would support reef restoration to sustain areas trafficked by tourists. I urge you to pass this bill. Mahalo.

LATE

SB-304-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/21/2023 8:41:09 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/22/2023 9:30:00 AM

| Submitted By | Organization | Testifier Position | Testify |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Matthew Geyer | Individual | Support | Written Testimony Only |

Comments:

Support for SB304

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

Apologies for the late testimony, thank you for hearing this important bill, please support it.

Mahalo.

Matthew Geyer

LATE

**Testimony in Support of SB304
Senate Committee on Ways and Means**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Katerina Im 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.

As a senior in high school who has lived on 'Oahu for my entire life, I have seen the changes in our natural landscapes and the impact of people on the environment. I rarely visit Waikiki, unless I am going surfing, but during lockdown in 2020, I frequented Waikiki beach often. I enjoyed the clean beaches and the water that felt clean without a film of sunscreen on top. Now my trips to Waikiki include a difficult trek with my board through a maze of people and frequent stops to pick up trash. I support SB304 because I believe that while tourists do help to sustain our economy in Hawaii, they are having a significant negative impact on our environment and should take some steps toward accountability.

We face significant pressure from visitors on our home, and those impacts are taking a toll on our environment and communities. 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. 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 the endangered species capital of the world, as an island with disappearing coastlines to sea level rise, and as a coastal community that 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. 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.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I hope that SB304 is able to pass the Senate because of the positive impact it will have on Hawai'i's landscape and environment now and for future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,
Katerina Im