



Ke'ena Kuleana Ho'okipa O Hawai'i  
Hawai'i Convention Center  
1801 Kalākaua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815  
**kelepona** tel 808 973 2255  
**kelepa'i** fax 808 973 2253  
**kahua pa'a** web [hawaii tourismauthority.org](http://hawaii tourismauthority.org)

**Josh Green, M.D.**  
*Governor*

**John De Fries**  
*President and Chief Executive Officer*

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

Friday, February 24, 2023  
1:30 p.m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**HOUSE BILL NO. 1233 HD2**  
**RELATING TO TOURISM**

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

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on HB1233 HD2, which would require the School of Travel Industry Management of the University of Hawai'i to conduct a study that assesses the tourism social carrying capacity for each of the Hawaiian Islands.

Understanding capacity limits is important an important element of destination management. For example, we have seen improved experiences and reduced impacts to natural environments and facilities at state parks that have implemented reservations systems to manage capacity: Wai'ānapanapa on Maui, Lē'ahi (Diamond Head) on O'ahu, and Hā'ena on Kaua'i.

We appreciate the work Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and members of the Committee on Water and Land on this HD2, incorporating our suggested changes to include Lāna'i and Moloka'i in the scope of this study, and to consider a longer timeframe to facilitate the incorporation of more community and industry input.

While we ultimately defer to the School of Travel Industry Management on matters related to the implementation of this measure, HTA stands ready to assist, including utilizing the steering committees, task forces, and working groups convened as part of the Destination Management Action Plan process to find stakeholders to participate in this study.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide these comments on HB1233 HD2.



February 24, 2023

Committee on Finance  
Rep. Kyle Yamashita, Chair  
Rep. Lisa Kitagawa, Vice Chair

### Testimony regarding HB 1233\_HD2

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

UNITE HERE Local 5 represents working people throughout Hawaii's hotel, food service and health care industries. Beyond working in the visitor and health care industries, our members reside in communities across the state and are impacted by tourism inside and outside of work. **UNITE HERE Local 5 enthusiastically supports the intent of HB 1233, as the future of Hawaii tourism must be carefully planned and guided to ensure that the visitor industry can continue to sustain Hawaii's economy without deteriorating living conditions for the local community. The question of how much tourism is too much, how to balance the economic benefits of tourism with the wellbeing of Hawaii's people, is one of the most important issues our community must face and resolve.**

**Local 5 supports HB 1233\_HD2 as amended from the original HB1233, but we request a further amendment.**

We support a better balance of stakeholders to conduct the study and create the report; current language in HB1233\_HD2 allows the TIM school to consult with stakeholders such as the UH Center for Labor Education and Research ("CLEAR"), the sea grant program and the Kamakakuokalani center for Hawaiian studies. Section 2, part (c) of the bill should be amended to become item (7) of part (b), and amended to state:

~~(e7) The school of travel industry management may c~~onsult with ~~any other relevant agency, stakeholder, or other entity, including~~ the Hawaii sea grant college program, ~~and the~~ Kamakakuokalani center for Hawaiian studies of the University of Hawaii at Manoa, ~~and~~ the center for labor education and research of the University of Hawaii West Oahu, all visitor industry unions, and any other relevant agency, stakeholder, or other entity that the school deems relevant for purposes of the study.

We support the other amendments in the HD2 version and feel they are critical to the success of the study:

Local 5 supports the amendment by which the study would assess visitor industry employment; not just the number of jobs, but the quality, the benefits, and the changes in each over time.

Coming out of the pandemic, many hotels have less staff and less cumulative work hours than in 2019, even after adjusting for occupancy. Nor did this start with COVID – it is part of a long-term nationwide trend. What the industry provides in good, quality jobs impacts the financial benefit of tourism to our communities and our state – both in terms of wages and tax income. It impacts quality of life for residents. It impacts residents' ability to afford housing, food, and other necessities. It impacts whether people need to have second and third jobs to survive, which in turn impacts childcare costs, healthcare costs, etc. To the extent tourism as an industry fails to provide for workers and residents, we would argue that it leads to out-migration, increased homelessness, and the inability to staff the visitor industry itself as well as a variety of other industries critical to our lives and futures.

We support examining the capacity of resources that residents and visitors alike rely on, and the limits and costs on scaling them up. This includes clean drinking water, ability to import food and other goods and necessities, power generation, wastewater treatment, solid waste disposal, roadways and other transportation infrastructure, public services, and more. These impacts feed into one another as well, and this should be taken into account to the extent possible. For instance, increased traffic doesn't just mean taking longer to get to and from work; it also impacts the cost of childcare, the ability for people to hold multiple jobs, emergency response times, actual access to recreational and cultural resources, etc.

Local 5 supports the amendment by which the study would include looking at other locales facing overtourism. It would be useful to know what interventions may have been tried in other places, and their results.

Thank you for your consideration.

**HB-1233-HD-2**

Submitted on: 2/22/2023 8:15:59 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2023 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Will Caron	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Policymakers at popular tourist destinations around the world are increasingly seeking estimates of tourism social carrying capacity to allow action to be taken to control visitation before over-tourism occurs. Here in Hawai‘i, the school of travel industry management at the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa has proposed a study to provide policymakers and destination managers with estimates of the tourism social carrying capacity for each of the islands of O‘ahu, Maui, Hawai‘i, and Kaua‘i. Please support this initiative.

**HB-1233-HD-2**

Submitted on: 2/23/2023 6:59:59 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2023 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ingrid Peterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Committee Members!

Please support Bill 1233 which is vitally important for making plans for our future which interface with tourism.

To quote Rep. Natalia Hussey-Burdick, "In order to make informed decisions about the future of tourism on our islands, we need to know our limits. Excessive tourism can easily result in long-term damage to our environment, our economy and the quality of life for our residents."

Mahslo nui,

Ingrid Peterson,

resident from 1963

**HB-1233-HD-2**

Submitted on: 2/23/2023 8:56:15 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2023 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Shizuma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of HB1233

I think this is long overdue and needed and will find that Oahu and Maui are heavily over carrying capacities for tourism and thus "overtoured." With the poisoning of our water systems at Red Hill and the potential contamination of our source of freshwater, heavy consideration must be given to our natural resources, especially fresh water.

I recommend, however, amending the date in which this bill takes effect to be sooner, as the year 3000 is very inappropriate. I believe this bill should take effect on January 1, 2024, as it is recommending a study and not calling for changes or compliance of anyone.

I also recommend amending the bill to include consulting with the county water resource managing systems (i.e. Board of Water Supply) to understand the amount of freshwater available and its impact on the social carrying capacity, with the University of Hawaii College of Engineering Environmental Engineers to assess infrastructure impacts on water, sewer, and roads and its effects on social carrying capacity, and with the Department of Agriculture and the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency to assess the amount of food produced and the amount of food available in Hawaii to understand its effects on the social carrying capacity in times of disasters and emergencies.

Thank you for your consideration.

**HB-1233-HD-2**

Submitted on: 2/23/2023 9:11:53 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2023 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Irene Ryding	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We are unable to sustain the insane number of tourists visiting our islands. We got a glimpse of nature repairing the incessant tourist damage during Covid when our reefs came back to life momentarily. Today they are dead again covered in toxic sunscreen sludge.

Additionally, places like Hana Highway are not meant to be tourist attractions...this is our only road to and from town. You took away Haleakala sunrise and Waianapanapa from us as tourists and tourism companies take all the registered spots, but still subject us to difficulties on the road solely caused by tourists? This is more than insulting to locals who suffer daily from these abuses!

Enough is enough...locals should be first priority, not tourism.

**HB-1233-HD-2**

Submitted on: 2/23/2023 9:45:58 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2023 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nanea Lo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hello,

My name is Nanea Lo. I'm born and raised in the Hawaiian Kingdom a Kanaka Maoli.

I'm writing in SUPPORT of HB1233 HD2.

me ke aloha 'āina,  
Nanea Lo, Mō'ili'ili



**HB-1233-HD-2**

Submitted on: 2/24/2023 1:21:35 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2023 1:30:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marilyn Mick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support this bill.

Mahalo, Marilyn Mick, Honolulu