

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

**Senate Committees on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
and Water and Land**

Tuesday, February 14, 2023
1:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

**In Support of the Intent
S.B. No. 304, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees**

Chairs DeCoite and Inouye, Vice Chairs Wakai and Elefante, and members of the Senate Committees on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism, and Water and Land:

The Office of the Governor supports the intent of S.B. No. 304, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees. However, our Office prefers the language in S.B. No. 1349, Relating to Natural Resources Management, for the reasons below and respectfully requests your consideration of that measure.

The impacts on Hawaii's natural resources, consequences of both residents and visitors, is an overarching concern in our State and one of the priorities of this Administration. Both S.B. No. 304 and S.B. No. 1349 recognize that human-induced impacts on our environment, including increased pollution, stress on our natural resources, soil degradation, and natural habitat loss, are cause for great concern and immediate action. For all who live here, Hawaii's natural resources are a vital part of our past and present, but also our future.

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 impacts by visitors. S.B. No. 1349, which was introduced this regular session, establishes the visitor green fee program, which includes a license and assessment of a visitor green fee on visitors for the usage of Hawaii's state-owned parks, beaches, forests, trails, or other state-owned recreational natural areas. S.B. No. 1349 provides a means of sustained funding for the protection, restoration, regeneration, enhancement, and care of Hawaii's natural and cultural recreational resources.

Testimony of Office of the Governor
S.B. No. 304
February 14, 2023
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While S.B. No. 304 and other measures before this Joint Committee may be of similar intent to S.B. No. 1349, we respectfully request this Joint Committee's consideration of S.B. No. 1349, which has been vetted by the Department of the Attorney General and Department of Land and Natural Resources. S.B. No. 1349 is a commitment and an undertaking to ensure responsible and caring stewardship of Hawaii's natural resources so that residents and visitors to our State can reap and enjoy the natural resources that make Hawaii so valued.

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



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

ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:

S.B. NO. 304, RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES.

BEFORE THE:

SENATE COMMITTEES ON WATER AND LAND AND ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

DATE: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 **TIME:** 1:00 p.m.

LOCATION: State Capitol, Room 229

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

Chairs Inouye and DeCoite and Members of the Committees:

The Department of the Attorney General supports the intent and purpose of this bill, but we have legal concerns and provide the following comments.

The purpose of the bill is to establish, within the Department of Land and Natural Resources, a visitor impact fee program to collect a fee from non-Hawaii residents and issue licenses to allow visitors to visit state parks, beaches, forests, hiking trails, or other natural areas on state land. The bill establishes a civil penalty in the form of a fine for not paying the fee, although implementation of the penalty provisions is delayed for a period of 5 years.

A visitor impact fee special fund is established for the fees collected. An environmental legacy commission will be established to guide and approve disbursements from the special fund, including disbursements to state agencies, counties, and qualified nonprofit organizations.

The special fund may be used for projects that provide "protection, restoration, and enhancement of Hawaii's natural resources"; that increase "resilience of state-owned natural resources"; or that advance the "State's ability to protect natural resources through the establishment, stability and growth of an environmentally responsible work force" (page 14, lines 3-9).

Because this bill distinguishes between residents and non-Hawaii residents, it may be subject to challenges under various provisions of the United States Constitution, including the First Amendment, the Privileges and Immunities Clause, the Commerce Clause, and the Equal Protection Clause. However, the recreational nature of the State-owned resources that are subject to the licensing requirement increases the likelihood it can withstand constitutional scrutiny because federal courts have already addressed these challenges and upheld nonresident fees for other purely recreational activities. See *Daly v. Harris*, 215 F. Supp. 2d 1098 (D. Haw. 2002), *aff'd*, 117 Fed. Appx. 498 (9th Cir. 2004)(upholding nonresident parking fees at Hanauma Bay).

Even if fundamental rights are not affected, the United States Constitution still requires that there be a rational basis for the distinction between residents and nonresidents, which includes a reasonable nexus between the problems caused by nonresidents and the remedies sought to be achieved by the administration and enforcement of the program. *Id.* at 1117-18. This bill raises concerns because there are few constraints on the areas of state land that are subject to the licensing requirement and because of the breadth of permissible uses for the funds. This bill does not provide for site-specific designations of particular recreational areas, and it authorizes the environmental legacy commission to disburse funds for some purposes that are only tangentially related to the impacts caused by nonresidents. For example, funds from the special fund may be used for the establishment of an "environmentally responsible workforce." The relationship between the impacts of nonresidents on Hawaii's natural resources and an environmentally responsible workforce may be viewed as attenuated.

In addition to these constitutional concerns, section 37-52.3, HRS, provides that a special fund must have uses with a clear nexus between the benefits sought and the charges made upon the nonresident users. And Hawaii courts have held that fees can only be used for the purposes for which they were collected. *State v. Medeiros*, 89 Hawai'i 361, 366 (1999) (distinguishing a fee from a tax). The purpose clause of this bill refers to the fee as a means of generating additional revenue, which is more like the purposes for a tax.

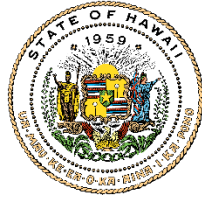
For these reasons, the visitor impact fee program should have a clear purpose clause and a strong relationship between the harms associated with impacts of nonresidents and the uses of the funds held in the visitor impact fee special fund.

To address these concerns, the Department of the Attorney General suggests that this Committee incorporate the purpose clause and certain key features of Senate Bill No. 1349, Relating to Natural Resources Management, which has been reviewed by the Department of the Attorney General and is more narrowly tailored. For example, Senate Bill No. 1349 provides that the site-specific areas subject to the license requirement will be set by rule, which will allow the program to target areas most frequented by tourists. The rulemaking process can also address concerns about duplicative fees or pre-existing entrance fees to certain state parks and natural areas. Senate Bill No. 1349 also more narrowly defines the uses for moneys in the special fund to emphasize the relationship between the impacts of nonresidents on natural resources and the permissible uses for the special fund. The permissible uses should be focused on environmental projects associated with visitor impacts. The Department of the Attorney General is eager to work with this Committee to incorporate these changes and increase the chance of success for this important visitor impact fee program.

Thank you for the opportunity to make comments.

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

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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

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LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
DAWN N. S. CHANG
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committees on
WATER AND LAND
and
ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229, Via Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 304
RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

Senate Bill 304 proposes to establish a visitor green fee program to be administered by the Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department), a visitor green fee special fund, and an environmental legacy commission. The bill also proposes to appropriate funds for the establishment of the environmental legacy commission and a strategic plan. **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

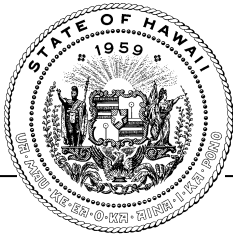
natural resources - reducing the overall impact of tourism on their environments, improving the quality of visitor experiences, and supporting community stewardship of these special places. Visitors and many residents do not mind paying a green fee because they know it goes back to caring for the beautiful 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 Department thanks all introducers of the various green fee measures this session, and welcomes the opportunity to work with the legislature to incorporate helpful language from all measures. 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.

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



**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 WATER AND LAND, AND
ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

Tuesday, February 14, 2023, 1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

in consideration of
SB 304
RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES.

Chairs Inouye and DeCoite, Vice Chairs Elefante and Wakai, and Members of the Senate Committees on Water and Land, and Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism:

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) **supports** SB 304, which collect fees to fund the protection and increased resilience of Hawai'i's natural and outdoor recreational resources, and to establish an Environmental Legacy Commission to guide and approve the disbursement of those revenues.

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. The OPSD looks forward to continuing to assist our state partners by serving as an *ex officio* member of the proposed Environmental Legacy Commission.

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.



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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 ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM
AND
WATER AND LAND**

February 14, 2023
1:00 p.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

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

Aloha Chairs DeCoite and Inouye, Vice Chairs Wakai and Elefante, and Members of the Committees on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism and Water and Land,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments in support of the intent of SB304, to collect fees to fund the protection and increased resilience of Hawai'i's natural and outdoor recreational resources, and to establish the Environmental Legacy Commission to guide and approve the disbursement of those revenues.

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, but whichever model the Legislature decides upon to facilitate visitor contributions to the care of our natural resources, 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. We stand ready to assist in educating visitor industry stakeholders and visitors, and will gladly designate a person to serve as an ex officio member of

the Environmental Legacy Commission. 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.

TAX FOUNDATION OF HAWAII

126 Queen Street, Suite 305

Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 Tel. 536-4587

SUBJECT: MISCELLANEOUS, Visitor Impact Fee

BILL NUMBER: HB 1162, SB 304

INTRODUCED BY: HB by SAIKI; SB by DELA CRUZ, AQUINO, AWA, CHANG, KANUHA, KEITH-AGARAN, KIM, LEE, MCKELVEY, MORIWAKI, RHOADS, Kidani, Richards, Shimabukuro, Wakai

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: 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. Establishes the Environmental Legacy Commission to allocate revenues from the visitor impact fee to protect and manage natural resources. 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.

The bill also establishes an Environmental Legacy Commission to guide and approve DLNR's disbursement of impact fee revenues out of the special fund. The 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: Upon Approval, but the appropriations in the bill take effect on July 1, 2023.

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.

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: 1/31/2023

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

**Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
Committee on Water and Land
February 14, 2023, 1:00 pm
Conference Room 229 and via Videoconference**

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee:

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) supports SB 304, 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 and Environmental Legacy Commission to allocate revenues from the visitor impact fee to protect and manage natural resources.

SB 304 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 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. 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 wetlands

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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 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.

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.

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.



Coalition Letter in Support of Hawai'i Green Fee
Committee on Water and Land | Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
Support of SB304
 February 11, 2023

Aloha Chairs DeCoite, Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, Wakai, and Members of the Committees

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 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 and island lifestyle 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.

The organizations listed below are writing in support of legislation to create a visitor impact fee program with the following key elements: (1) Charge visitors a \$50 environmental license for the use of state-owned natural and cultural resources, (2) includes a significant allocation toward nonprofit and local government implementing partners, and (3) is overseen by a public-private commission made up of cultural, sustainability, and conservation experts, industry leaders, and agency representatives. These three elements will support a robust and effective program that fosters community and cross-sector support.

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.



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.

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.**

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 Pupukeya-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

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



February 10, 2023

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
Committee on Energy Economic Development and Tourism
Senator Lorraine Inouye, Chair
Senator Brandon Elefante, Vice Chair
Committee on Water and Land
Hawaii State Legislature

Comments on SB304

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism, and Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Senate Committee on Water and Land,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB304.

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.

One of the first tasks of the Environmental Legacy Commission that this bill would create should be to take a deeper look 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.

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



SB 304, RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

FEBRUARY 14, 2023 · SENATE WATER AND LAND AND ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM COMMITTEES · CHAIR SEN. LORRAINE R. INOUE AND SEN. LYNN DECOITE

POSITION: Support.

RATIONALE: Imua Alliance supports SB 304, relating to visitor impact fees, which establishes a visitor impact fee program within the Hawai'i 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; requires the Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to conduct a study on the potential revenues expected to be generated by the visitor impact fee program.

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

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

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

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

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

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

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 7:14:05 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

The Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii support the concept of having visitors pay fees for visiting natural resources in Hawaii, given the toll visitors can place on our natural resources. Please pass a bill that achieves this result.

Mahalo!

Hawaii Reef and Ocean Coalition and Climate Protectors Hawaii (by Ted Bohlen)



2/14/2023

WTL/EET Committee
Hawaii State Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair DeCoite, Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism and Committee on Water and Land,

Position: Support SB304

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**, 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

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 12:16:54 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Pauline Sato	Testifying for Malama Learning Center	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SUPPORT (Please see letter.)

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:36:24 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Chairs Inouye and DeCoite, Vice Chairs Elefante and Wakai, and Honorable members of the Committees on Water and Land and Energy, Economic Development and Tourism,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of SB 304.

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 as one viable pathway to reduce our state's conservation deficit and otherwise care for our islands.

Please pass SB 304.



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 Lorraine Inouye, Chair
The Honorable Brandon Elefante, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Water and Land

The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair
The Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 304 Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 14, 2023, 1:00 pm, Conference room 229

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. 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

Mālama Learning Center
P.O. Box 1662, Honolulu, Hawai'i 967806
www.malamalearningcenter.org



Environmental Caucus of
The Democratic Party of Hawai'i

Energy & Climate Action Committee

Tuesday, February 14, 2023, 1:00 pm

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

SENATE BILL 304 – RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACT FEES

Position: Strong Support

Me ke Aloha, Chairs DeCoite and Inouye, Vice-Chairs Wakai and Elefante, and members of the Senate Committees on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism and on Water & Land:

SB304 Establishes a visitor impact fee program within the Department of Land and Natural Resources, to collect a fee to visit a state park, forest, hiking trail, or other state natural area. It establishes a commission to allocate these revenues to protect and manage natural resources.

The Energy & Climate Action Committee cannot overemphasize the urgency of doing catch-up for proper stewardship of our basic land resources, which are threatened by overuse and by potential contamination with seeds of invasive species. The efforts to maintain and restore these resources and to control invasives have been notoriously underfunded and understaffed, resulting in runaway disruptions of native habitat. Native habitat is widely regarded as the reason tourists come here – as it's said: "the environment *is* the economy". However, visitor services of all kinds result in the arrival of foreign species and an unsustainable level of impact if we want to remain *Hawai'i*, rather than just another colonial outpost completely overrun by foreign climes, like Guahan. One wonders if our legislators really "get it". The slow change gradually accelerates, and those in comfortable positions forget what was lost.

Our natural resource agency staffs have testified repeatedly that they are constrained to barely keep up with these impacts, to say nothing of maintaining a proper level of maintenance and control. Never mind restoration of critical habitat. This is shameful and a seriously depressing situation for *maka'āinana* and *kama'āina* alike. When we have budget surpluses, we must invest in our homeland, in the well-being of our people, and in the education of visitors, not merely accede to the wishes of global capital. It is time to reassess the meaning of our island sovereignty as a community with "special qualities". This bill proposes to aid tremendously in this effort.

Mahalo for the opportunity to address this matter.

/s/ Charley Ice & Ted Bohlen, Co-Chairs, Energy and Climate Action Committee
Environmental Caucus of the Democratic Party

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:46:53 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Carmen Guzman-Simpliciano	Testifying for Kingdom Pathways	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee [HB1162]

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee [SB304]

My name is Carmen Guzman-Simpliciano, and I am testifying in strong support of [HB1162/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 lifelong resident of Wai'anae and a Community advocate for conserving and preserving our sources of life and endangered species, advocating for Mākaha Beaches sea-level rise, water quality, coral restoration, beach clean-ups, and perpetuation of culture. With the many issues in our coastal regions, the Visitor Green Fee aligns and would support our community's needs. Also, it provides a sustained funding source to enable our community groups, nonprofits, and DLNR, to implement solutions and scale work already being done to preserve Hawai'i Nei.

It would specifically illuminate the management plan proposed with bill SB 1258 that vaguely states to develop parking stalls and checkpoints for a parking pass to generate revenue for Kaena State Parks.

Our nonprofit, Kingdom Pathways, works closely with multiple state and city agencies and other nonprofits, including DAR, DOBOR, DOFAW, DLNR, CWB, and DOH. With the vast inclusion of this measure, I urge the committee to pass the visitor green fee program this session to begin the restoration of our 'āina as soon as possible.

Respectfully, I urge the committee to pass this measure as it will help alleviate the need to take drastic measures to develop the natural beauty of Mākua, Keawa'ula, and Kaena State Parks to generate Parking Fee Funds. In addition, this bill is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and supplementing existing programs and entities of the City and State to further enhance our local communities and visitors we share it with for future generations.

Mahalo Nunui for the opportunity to offer mana'o,
Carmen Guzman-Simpliciano
Director of Kingdom Pathways



February 14, 2023

Senator Lynn DeCoite
Chair, Committee on Economic
Development and Tourism

Senator Glenn Wakai
Vice-Chair, Committee on Economic
Development and Tourism

Senator Lorraine Inouye
Chair, Committee on Water and Land

Senator Brandon Elefante
Vice-Chair, Committee on Water and Land

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

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante and members of the committees,

On behalf of Resources Legacy Fund (RLF), we are writing in support SB 304 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. It also establishes the Environmental Legacy Commission to allocate revenues from the visitor impact fee to protect and manage natural resources.

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 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.

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



Maui Hotel & Lodging
ASSOCIATION

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

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism

Senate Bill 304: Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

February 14, 2023, 1:00 pm
Conference Room 229

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 would like to offer comments for Senate Bill 304**, 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. Establishes the Environmental Legacy Commission to allocate revenues from the visitor impact fee to protect and manage natural resources. 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.

While the proposed measure does establish the Visitor Green Fee Special Fund and the Environmental Legacy Commission to allocate these funds, we feel that clearer language is needed. In future drafts, MHLA would like to see language that guarantees funds will be protected from deposit into the State's General Fund and a framework to allocate the monies to the State parks most in need.

MHLA respectfully submits these comments for your consideration for Senate Bill 304.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



HAWAII LODGING & TOURISM
A S S O C I A T I O N

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

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, & Tourism
Senate Committee on Water & Land
Senate Bill 304
February 14, 2023

Chair DeCoite, Chair Inouye, 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 and humbly requests the Committees' 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, we would ask that the Committees consider the inclusion of a representative from the private sector tourism industry be included on the proposed Commission.

HLTA supports the intent of SB 304.

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer this testimony.

Testimony of Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i

2/13/2023

Bill: **SB 304**

Committee: House EEP

Position: **Support**

Hearing Date: 2/14/23 1:00 PM

LATE

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee [SB304],

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', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rafael Bergstrom
Executive Director
Sustainable Coastlines Hawai'i

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 12:08:05 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jerry Isham	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

my name is Jerry Isham I am a fisherman in waianae and fully support this bill the Dlnr should do a EIS on the tourism industry because there is no question there is an impact and residents should not be left holding the Tab!

Testimony in Support of SB304
Senate Committee on Water and Land

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and 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 restore our 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.

I want to thank the committee for hearing this bill and my testimony today. 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

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 9:18:36 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kim Koch	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Fully support this proposal

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 5:28:57 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Douglas Perrine	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB304

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/10/2023 7:11:13 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this Bill.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 11:32:28 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Randy Fernley	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this bill

Randy Fernley

Senate Committee on Water and Land
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

Tuesday, February 14, 2023

1:00 p.m.

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

In Support of the Intent
S.B. No. 304, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

Aloha Chair Inouye, Chair DeCoite, Vice Chairs, and Committee Members on both Water and Land Energy as well as the Economic Development and Tourism,

My name is Kaitlynn Holt Felipe. I am a Native Hawaiian, a resident of Hawai‘i, and a graduate student of the University of Hawai‘i Mānoa. I am testifying in support of S.B. 304, Relating to Visitor Impact Fees, for the reasons below and respectfully request your consideration of this measure.

Undoubtedly, the negative impact on Hawai‘i's natural and cultural resources is an overarching concern that needs immediate attention and action. It would be unwise not to acknowledge that our communities live on islands and that our resources can become dangerously limited if not adequately managed and culturally understood. S.B. 304 recognizes the human-induced impacts on our environment, including but not limited to increased pollution, excessive stress on our natural resources, soil degradation, and natural habit loss because our State does not have the funding, staffing, and proper accessibility, and resources to manage our tourist-dependent State. Like me, all who live here, a person who has witnessed the drastic changes and effects of Hawai‘i's natural resources, must advocate for our environment, my home. Hawai‘i's natural resources are a vital part of our past and present and our future if we want to continue to thrive here.

I support this because a visitor fee is a significant and effective way to raise additional revenue to offset visitor impacts and ensure a healthy and functioning environment for our people. There are prosperous countries like Palau, Bhutan, and New Zealand that demonstrate and implement visitor/green fees at visitor destinations. In November 2019, a year after the fee's introduction, the Palau government announced that it raised \$9 million. These funds were used to fund fisheries protection, the Protected Areas Network, and other facets of environmental protection efforts and the tourism industry. According to the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT), in July 2022, visitors who came to Hawai‘i represented a 92.4% recovery from July 2019. July 2022 is the highest monthly visitor count since January 2020. If we fail to manage, protect, and perpetuate our natural resources in Hawai‘i, it is only in due time that Hawai‘i becomes a depleted atoll, a wasteland of stories and loss.

The S.B. 304 is a commitment and an undertaking to ensure caring stewardship of Hawaii's natural resources so that we can all reap and enjoy the natural resources that make Hawaii so valued. These bills offer resolution and opportunity that we must act on now for our communities, environments, and future.

Mahalo nui mai kākou for the opportunity to testify in support of this bill,

Kaitlynn Holt Felipe

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/11/2023 5:42:10 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Luci Price	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB304.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 12:23:43 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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 **strong support** of SB304.

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

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

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 9:04:43 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha Commitee leadership,

My name is Alex Filardo and I am a fisher that resides on O'ahu who has worked in management locally for five years. It is very clear to the fishing community that tourists impact our coastal resources, especially coral reefs, which serve as critical habitat to the fisheries our residents rely on. The impact of visitors across the State, but especially on O'ahu which burdens most of the tourism pressure, is significant enough that they should provide financial resources to upkeep our environment.

When it comes to managing our coastal ecosystems, supporting sustainable fisheries, and proper and effect management of our nearshore waters, we are in need of extensive additional resources in the form of funding, job roles, and community engagement. A visitor green fee program could create these resources for agencies and nonprofits to sustain and restore our marine ecosystems.

Please pass SB304 without amendments.

Alex Filardo

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 9:27:02 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Kala'e Lopes and I am testifying 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 Waimanalo and have studied environmental science and worked a few years in the conservation field. Most of our efforts in both studies and fields had to do with offsetting damage done by human impact. The amount of time and effort we put in isn't enough to undo damage or even maintain our natural resources. To add in most of our efforts were done through unpaid efforts! With more funding and resources directed toward conservation work, I feel this might give the people more control over the dwindling resources. Tourist come and go, but we live here! And will suffer if more efforts aren't directed at conservation and environmental protection.

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. 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

I thank you for your time and consideration in passing this bill. If passed, this bill would be a big win for locals, native Hawaiians, and future generations to come. 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,

Kala'e Lopes

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 10:27:21 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaleiheana-a-Pohaku Stormcrow	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Kaleiheana Stormcrow and I am testifying in strong support of SB304 which will 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 grew up in Kailua, O‘ahu in the 1990s before it became what it is now. I have seen firsthand how unchecked tourism affects the land, the wai, and the kai. I have witnessed years of degraded trails because they are all too heavily trafficked on O‘ahu. As a Kanaka Maoli it is very important to me to see visitors pay a green fee. I do not think it is enough, but it is a step in a positive direction.

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. As a wildlife biologist and ecologist, I know how badly we need funds for restoration projects. Perhaps this bill can create new jobs for those of us already working on land restoration and conservation. 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share my mana‘o. Imposing a fee is a positive step in trying to undo some of the impacts extractive tourism is having on our islands. 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,

Kaleiheana Stormcrow

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 12:09:53 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Members of the Committee on Water and Land and the Commttee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism

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.

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.**

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Virginia Tincher

Aina Haina, Oahu

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 1:14:17 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ariana Hansen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Ariana Hansen and I am testifying 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 in Kailua, Oahu where I spend so much of my time out in nature, enjoying local hiking trails and accessing our incredible beaches, and recreating in the ocean that raised me. It can be very upsetting to see the detrimental impacts of tourism on a daily basis including plastic pollution, littered beaches, eroding shorelines and hazardous hiking trails caused by heavy foot traffic, which is why I thought it was important to support a measure for a visitor impact fee and submit testimony today. I would love to see monies generated from a fee like this to go towards the many passionate local organizers we are lucky to have fighting for a brighter and sustainable future in Hawaii, as it is indeed imperative and time is of the essence in regards to climate change and the numerous actions we need to take as a state to mitigate its effects.

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. 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

Thank you for your sense of urgency in regards to such a pressing issue. 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,

Ariana Hansen

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 2:19:51 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rebecca Ann Skjothaug	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

SB304

Relating to Visitor Impact Fees

Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Rebecca Skjothaug and I am here on behalf of myself. I am in support of a visitor impact fee.

Tourism is the main source of income for the state and it is the responsibility of the state to protect the public land and water resources for future generations. With lack of care and responsibility to protect these resources by visitors it must be required by the state to charge a fee to help maintain the longevity and biodiversity of these natural resources. As stated by the projected bill the funding would be allocated to:

- Protect, restore, or enhance terrestrial and marine natural resources;**
- Increase the resilience and adaptation of Hawaii's natural resources with environmentally beneficial strategies to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change, including coastal erosion, sea level rise, damage to reefs, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, damage to land resources, and other impacts; or**
- Remove and control invasive species and propagate and plant native species.**

This allocation is crucial for the economy and the health of the āina.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Aloha,

Rebecca Skjothaug

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 3:20:37 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sunshine Eckstrom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please support SB304. We need to support our community and our environment. SB304 gives us a way to make tourism less extractive and more protective of Hawaii.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 3:26:20 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha honorable Senators,

My name is Dyson Chee and I am testifying 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 youth who was born and raised on O‘ahu, this is a critically important issue to me because climate change is one of the issues at the forefront of my mind when I think about livability here, and we must take more action to ensure that Hawai‘i has a place for it's keiki and youh.

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. 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony, and I urge you to pass SB304. 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

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND
Hearing on Feb. 14, 2023 at 1:00 pm

SUPPORTING SB 304

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

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. 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 to use the State's natural and cultural resources. It is a sensible way to help pay for the preservation and maintenance of Hawaii's natural and cultural resources.

Dear Chairs Inouye and DeCoite, Vice Chairs Elefante and Wakai, 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

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 7:41:43 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I 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 measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here.

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

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

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

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

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

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 7:53:39 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johanna Stone	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill, we need to be holding tourists and the industries that benefit the most, accountable for their destructive actions. This bill is just a start.

My name is Johanna K Stone and I am testifying 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 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. 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

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.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 8:19:45 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Water and Land pertaining to SB304:

SB304 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

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 8:27:00 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

I am writing to express my 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 kanaka oiwi living in Hawaii and I am tired of visitors not paying their fair share to preserve and protect our aina. Tourists come here to enjoy our reefs, our beaches, and our mountains. Most take and do nothing to give in return. A Green Fee is one small step towards maintenance and conservation of all the places in Hawaii that residents and visitors love so much. Currently, these places are suffering because of overvisitation and the lack of funds to maintain important infrastructure such as safe hiking trails.

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. 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Lorraine Waianuhe

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 9:53:57 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Katarina Ruiz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair and committee members weighing on the decision of SB 304. I am in support of a Green Fee for Hawaii. Over 40 countries have a similar fee in order to better protect their resources. Among the list is Palau, a model that we can use in Hawaii to better protect our resources. I only ask for the language of the Green Fee to include funding for ocean and freshwater resources. We must remember that the environment in Hawaii is what attracts visitors, so we have to start looking at these resources through a true value system which accurately reflects its impact, revenue that it brings in, our dependency on a thriving environment, and our public trust to ensure future generations will inherit a healthy environment. So we must think, what are the hidden costs to undervaluing our environment? How are we going to change this? A Green Fee is a good start.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 10:04:21 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support SB304 and HB1162.

The visitor impact fee program would allow the DLNR to generate funds to better maintain and regulate the areas that tourists use and abuse.

Nick R.

Kailua-Kona, Hawaii

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/12/2023 10:26:21 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Dear Chairs DeCoite and Inouye and Vice Chairs Wakai and Elefante and Members of the Committees:

My name is Elizabeth Bolton. I am a resident of the City and County of Honolulu, State of Hawai'i. I am testifying in strong support of Senate Bill No. 304 (SB 304).

Hawaii's natural resources, including reefs, oceans, forests, streams, estuaries, shorelines, and beaches, provide irreplaceable and invaluable benefits to visitors, residents, and the global community alike.

The Constitution of the State of Hawaii makes clear that our natural and cultural resources are subject to the public trust and therefore must be managed and protected for the benefit of present and future generations. Our legislature therefore has a duty to protect and preserve our natural resources.

Hawaii's natural resources face significant pressure from the heavy use from persons traveling to enjoy our State's natural resources. Many of our visitors do not understand the importance of respect for our Aina and the delicate ecosystem in which we live.

Our State's current underinvestment in our natural resources poses a significant threat to the visitor industry; the stability of our natural systems, including food systems and water quality; and the ecosystems, services, fisheries, economic resilience, and health and safety of the State.

Hawaii residents currently contribute to the protection and preservation of our natural resources through taxes, environmental care, subsistence, cultural practices, and the exercise of the values and practices embodied in the state constitution. However, with escalating visitor impacts and an increasing global threat to our island ecosystem, there is an immediate need for additional resources to protect, restore, sustain, manage, and conserve our natural resources.

A regenerative tourism fee has been suggested by the Hawaii Tourism Authority as a potential means to obtain these critical resources. Accordingly, visitors who enjoy and reap benefits of Hawaii's natural resources should contribute to their protection, care, and restoration. A license requirement for visitors who enjoy Hawaii's public beaches, trails,

parks, and ecosystems could generate the necessary funding each year to offset the adverse impacts of visitors and conserve Hawaii's irreplaceable green infrastructure in perpetuity.

Visitor impact fees, which are also known as "green fees" or "environmental protection fees", have been successfully implemented in many visitor~destinations throughout the world, including the Galapagos Islands, New Zealand, and Palau. In these locations, the fees have demonstrated compounding benefits for visitors, residents, and natural landscapes and seascapes. A visitor impact fee provides a reasonable and appropriate way to generate these needed revenues.

SB 203 would (i) establish a visitor impact fee of \$50, which would be an effective way to raise additional revenue to offset visitor impacts and ensure a healthy environment for future generations; and (ii) require a license for visitors to use Hawaii's public beaches, parks, trails, coastlines, and environment.

The visitor impact fees would be used to provide funding for the protection, restoration, regeneration, enhancement, and care of Hawaii's natural and outdoor recreational resources and build resilience of these resources to withstand the impacts of increased visitor use.

I strongly support, and urge you to pass, HB 304 and help mitigate the environmental impact caused by so many visitors to our islands. Mahalo for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

**Elizabeth Bolton
Kailua Resident**

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 1:44:08 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I STRONGLY Support the need for a Visitor Green Fee in Hawai'i.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:05:23 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jay lovell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support sb304

it long past time to look at the impact of visitors on the environment.

Jay love

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:44:05 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
joseph simpliciano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha I fully support the green fee as it is a means that has full oversight on each visitor to the Hawaiian islands. The green fee will ensure that each and every visitor will be charged a fee rather than hoping they will do so when they go to a State park or beach. The green fee will also help to fund programs that will help to preserve the natural beauty of Hawaii and by doing so it will meet our goals of sustainability in more than one way. Unlike Bills SB1258 and HB 1267. The green fee was introduced to many communities and has been promoted through various social media platforms with transparency to show that the program can work and it can meet the future goals of Hawaii. Please consider supporting as this Bill is a catch all Bill.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 6:50:03 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

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

My name is Tiffany Higa and I am testifying **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 resident that has been born and raised on O‘ahu, I’ve witnessed the impacts of overtourism here. Our home has been taken advantage of by visitors who perpetuate colonialism and disrespect the land and its natural 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, such as the nonprofit Protect and 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.**

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.**

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,

Tiffany Higa

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:51:16 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Kimberly De Souza and I am testifying in **strong support of SB304** which is a much needed measure to offset tourist and visitor impacts, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to restore our natural and cultural resources on our 'aina through a green fee program. This fee has been needed for many years now and I am extremely happy to see that it is finally being proposed and I am hoping it will pass unanimously. This has become an increasingly important issue as Hawai'i which is already known as the extinction capital of the world and with sea level rise affecting our disappearing coastlines, we are going to need help in order to begin the much needed restoration of our home.

This 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. 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

TThis 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,

Kimberly De Souza

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 7:57:39 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

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

My name is Mark Frazer and I am testifying 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. Born and raised in Hawai'i I have experienced first hand the impacts of the tourist industry on the islands. This green fee program will provide already scarce conservation funding to help restore our islands and at the same time accommodate the visitors and tourists who want to visit our beautiful home.

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. 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

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

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:15:46 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Daniel Amato	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB304

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:29:49 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Miya Peterson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Miya Peterson and I am testifying 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 someone who originally came to Hawai'i as a tourist, I can personally confirm that my family would have been more than willing to pay the fee and would have even been enthusiastic to do so because of its incredibly important purpose. A small percentage out of any tourist's vacation budget, the fee not only would provide local environmental advocacy and protection efforts with much-needed funds but would also provide tourists who care about the environment, like my family a decade ago, the opportunity to give back. I am aware that tourism is Hawai'i's primary industry and that potential harms to it are often avoided at all costs, but I'm submitting testimony here today to stress based on my personal experience and the experiences of others that this fee will certainly not bar or deter any tourists from travelling here and is certainly worth the effort it takes to implement and maintain.

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. As a part of the Hawai'i Youth Climate

Coalition, I cannot stress enough how impactful even a small amount of funding can be for environmental protection, preservation, and advocacy groups. 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

On behalf of all of us advocating for the environment, thank you for your time and dedication to preserving the beauty of Hawai'i for ages to come. 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,

Miya Peterson

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 8:58:15 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Navarra	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Committee members,

I'm writing in strong support of this legislation.

Conservation is critically underfunded and understaffed. We have huge problems with invasive plant and animal species that are very costly to manage, as well as a need to reforest to cover the land that is eroding and harming our marine environments every time sediment is wash into the ocean by heavy rains. This measure would help to fund these efforts and allow visitors to support improvements to the natural environment which attracted them to Hawaii in the first place.

Mahalo,
Jennifer Navarra

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:17:28 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Emma Stierhoff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Emma Stierhoff and I am testifying in strong support of SB304. This bill would offset the negative impacts of tourism through a visitor green fee program, and distribute funds to implement solutions for State and community programs working to mālama ‘āina. So often tourism here in Hawai‘i feeds into the pockets of large corporate interests while negatively impacting local ecosystems and desecrating sacred lands. While we should also work to restructure the tourism industry to be less extractive and more beneficial to kānaka maoli, a green fee would be a great start to ensure that those experiencing the costs of tourism are compensated or that these costs are offset in some way.

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. Tourism uses up and degrades our already limited pool of food and water resources, leaving less for those who depend upon the ‘āina for their livelihoods. By putting resources back into protecting ecosystems and building up communities, we might be able to compensate for these losses. The impact of tourists on our ‘āina is undeniable. A recent local study confirmed that Hawai‘i coral reefs attract visitors who then exacerbate their degradation. This is true for our other ecosystems as well.

As the endangered species capital of the world, as an island with limited available resources, 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 our ‘āina 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 to implement solutions and scale up work already being done to protect Hawai‘i. I urge the committee to pass a visitor green fee program this session to expand the much needed restoration work in 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

For the sake of the 'āina and the resiliency of Hawai'i, I urge you to pass SB304. We cannot let the extractive tourism industry continue at a cost to those living here. This bill is a clear pathway to protecting, restoring, and enhancing Hawai'i for our local communities as well as the visitors we share it with, for future generations and beyond.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify,

Emma Stierhoff

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 9:27:08 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nancy Jones	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators DeCoite, Wakai, Inouye, Elefante and Committee Members:

I present this testimony in SUPPORT of SB304 which imposes visitor impact fees on non-Hawai`i-residents as a means of generating revenue. I am not clear on whether the DLNR prefers to administer this program even with the fund appropriations needed to implement such a program OR whether this would be more easily managed by the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism -- since this would effectively be a tourist-related fee. IF the DLNR's added staff are prepared to deal with these added fees to access -- for example, Hawai`i's parks and beaches -- then they deserve as much support as possible. There is no question that Hawai`i could certainly use this added revenue from these proposed impact fees to maintain and/or improve Hawai`i's environment, infrastructure, education and needed social and agricultural programs. For all of the above reasons, I strongly encourage your Committees to please SUPPORT SB304 and pass this out of your committees -- but to reconfirm that DLNR wishes to oversee such a program upon receipt of necessary staffing and funding.

Mahalo for this opportunity to present this testimony SUPPORTING SB304.

Nancy Jones

PO Box 1462, Wai`anae, HI 96792/Email: nancyhydroalt@gmail.com

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

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Olivia Butterfly Rodriguez and I am testifying **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 16 year old student in Honolulu. It is important to me that my home can keep and restore its beautiful, diverse environment.**

This measure is a critical step to ensuring visitors are paying their fair share for the places they use, visit, and experience during their time here. 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. **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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.**

I appreciate your consideration of this bill, and would like to thank those who have fought for our right to our natural and cultural resources. On behalf of the youth of Oahu, I hope that this council will pass this bill. 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,

Olivia Butterfly Rodriguez

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:00:52 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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, 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 Hawaiians deserve an exemption to this green fee, resident or visitor status.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:52:05 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB304, which would establish a visitor green fee program. The tourist sites that are so loved deserve protection, and this program would help ensure that success. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Elizabeth Benyshek

Chair, Surfrider Foundation Oahu Chapter

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:52:43 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jon Mitchell	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The reasons that my family and I decided to move to the islands are many, but one of the most important ones was our connection to the land. As someone who has traveled the world, I can honestly say that Hawaii is one of the most beautiful places I have ever been, and why we decided to pack up and move to Hawaii and experience all the islands have to offer daily.

Even before we moved we always felt that some kind of fee that goes back to the islands to preserve its natural beauty (we jokingly called it a tourist visa) was something we believed in, and that is why I am happy, and indeed honored, to provide written testimony today on behalf of HB1162.

As you are aware there is already a funding gap of nearly \$ 400 million per year, and that will only increase as costs go up due to inflation and climate change. As an insurance professional, I see daily how both have greatly impacted the number of and size of claims, and it will be no different here on the islands.

Our current investment of in the environment of less than 1% of our state budget is not enough to move the needle. There has been plenty of talk about addressing climate change, and now is the time to take discernable action that will allow for increased funding to support the environment without being an undue burden to the citizens of Hawaii.

I hope that the legislature takes my testimony, along with what I am sure is the testimony of many others into consideration and makes the proper investments for Hawaii, not just for the next election cycle, but for generations to come.

Mahalo,

Jon Mitchell

Kaneohe, HI

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:03:12 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Good Afternoon Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sergeant Matthew J. Chamberlain of the United States Marine Corps, and I am testifying in strong support of [HB1162/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 originally from California, but I moved to Hawaii when I was in high school and have called Hawaii my home for the last 10 years. Hawaii has been the place I have lived for the longest and will continue to be my home for the long term. Because of this, I have a strong desire to maintain the environmental health of Hawaii and to give back in any way I can. Supporting this testimony proposed to you is one of the best ways I can give back, because it will ensure the environmental health and longevity of my home. I also believe that the Hawaii Green Fee will not only benefit Hawaii, but America and our planet as well.

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 the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR)

and nonprofit organizations including Papahānaumokuākea Marine Debris Project (PMDP), 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.

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.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I believe that 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.

R/S

Sgt Matthew J. Chamberlain

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 11:45:17 AM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Christian Squire	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of SB304 to impose a green fee on visitors to the island and put that money back into our community based organizations and local needs. These needs should be prioritized to protect the natural and cultural resources that draw visitors here in the first place. This additional funding would create jobs for locals while protectiing and restoring marine resources, native plants, and endangered species.

Mahalo,

Christian Squire

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 1:11:36 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

2/14/2023

WTL/EET Committee

Hawai'i State Capitol

Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Chair DeCoite, Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism and Committee on Water and Land,

Position: Support SB304

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely,

Marina Scott

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 1:55:56 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Giselle Kananiokakai Guerrero	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of SB304

Committee on Water and Land

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee SB304

My name is Giselle Kananiokakai Guerrero and I am testifying **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 have recently graduated with a bachelors degree in animal ecology and throughout my degree I have been educated on the vital importance of conservation and restoration of natural ecosystems. With this knowledge it is known in the world of conservation that the largest obstacle to conservation is funding. The science and knowledge is there that conserving and protecting our environment is not only beneficial to native flora and fauna but to us humans as well.

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. **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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.**

Mahalo nui loa for taking the time to read this testimony and for acting upon the urgency to protect and conserve our native environment. 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,

Giselle Kananiokakai Guerrero

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 2:01:53 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheldon Plentovich	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Green fees have been used to offset the impacts of tourism in other areas of the Pacific like Palau. I think is positive progress towards investing more in our 'aina and protecting native species found nowhere else in the world.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 2:24:43 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Strongly support!

About time!

Jim Lovell

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 2:48:57 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

I support environmental green fees for tourists coming to enjoy our idlsnd since tourists cause pollution and strain on natural resources, which require funding to preserve.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 3:25:48 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kylie Ann Wong	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As someone who has grown up in Hawai'i my whole life, the protection of the environment is more important now than ever. The climate crisis is at a pivotal point where if we give up trying, the long term effects of the climate crisis will become more disastrous than ever. The habitat of Hawai'i provided formative experiences that only made me care more for the environment. Now as a college student majoring in environmental studies with a goal of protection and justice, this bill (along with HB1162) are extremely important to the longevity of Hawai'i.

Sincerely, Kylie Wong

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 3:39:49 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lahela Spencer	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Lahela Spencer and I am in full support of SB304. I work in hospitality and interact with visitors every day where this is frequently a specific topic of conversation. Guests are more than willing to pay a travel tax that would directly benefit the people of Hawai'i in supporting Hawaiian culture, protecting our natural resources, and maintain public facilities, beaches, hiking trails etc.

Through these conversations with visitors, over the years, I've learned that visitors are more than willing to pay a travel fee, travel tax, and even admission to parks, hiking trails, beaches and are quite surprised that Hawai'i does not have a system in place for this.

Through the Covid-19 pandemic visitors to Hawaii paid a hefty amount for testing to enter Hawai'i and had no problem doing so. This clearly shows they are willing.

In addition to the Galapagos Islands, New Zealand, and Palau, other locations such as: Venice, Bali, Maldives, Norway, Bhutan, Austria, Croatia, France, and Germany and more have been successful in implementing a culture tax, green fee, or another tax along similar lines to protect their culture, natural resources, and maintain infrastructure that has been impacted by tourism.

Hawai'i is long overdue for this.

Mahalo nui.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 3:44:19 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rocco Baricchi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [HB1162/SB304]

Committee on Water and Land

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee [HB1162]

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee [SB304]

My name is Rocco Baricchi and I am testifying in strong support of [HB1162/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 born and raised on Maui and grew up in the town of Makawao. This issue is important to me because it directly impacts the future of not only our island, but our community. I support both HB1162 and SB304 because I believe it's a huge step forward in the right direction for Maui.

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. I previously worked under RCUH for East Maui Watershed Partnership and believe there is a major need for more conservation efforts on Maui. 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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.

The time for change is now. Let's use this as a call-to-action for future bills presented in benefit of the community of Maui. 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,

Rocco Baricchi

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 4:23:03 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dani Brock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of [HB1162/SB304]

Committee on Water and Land

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee [HB1162]

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee [SB304]

My name is Dani Brock and I am testifying **in strong support of [HB1162/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 have lived here my whole life and have seen the loss of resources and the overcrowding of the recreational spaces of my childhood. Now that I have raised 6 kids here and have 3 grandchildren I am longing to see the preservation of our generational home. During Covid I took my grandchildren to all of my favorite beaches from “the old days” and we were all amazed at how incredible it was to see the ocean waters cleaner, the coral coming back and the fish returning. We had an opportunity to see (and to remember) first hand what has been lost and the cost of over tourism.**

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. Our ohana does regular beach clean ups and we go around bringing food to the homeless. **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, made up of members from diverse areas of expertise.**

I appreciate the consideration of this bill as first steps towards greater Aloha Aina. 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,

Dani Brock

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 5:21:38 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

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

Comments:

Aloha. I urge support of SB304 because I believe 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.

SB-304

Submitted on: 2/13/2023 10:48:03 PM

Testimony for WTL on 2/14/2023 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Matthew Geyer	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Support for SB304

Aloha Chair Ichiyama, Vice Chair Poepoe, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land.

And Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

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.

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

Mahalo.

Matthew Geyer