
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO REGENERATIVE TOURISM.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the adverse effects
2 of traditional tourism on Hawaii's ecological and cultural
3 landscape have contributed to environmental degradation and
4 cultural dilution. There is an urgent need to shift towards a
5 tourism model that actively contributes to environmental
6 restoration, cultural integrity, and economic resilience within
7 the local community.

8 The legislature further finds that regenerative tourism can
9 prevent and mitigate environmental disasters, including limiting
10 coastal erosion, reducing reef dieback, and helping to prevent
11 wildfires by promoting sustainable environmental practices.

12 The legislature also finds that addressing economic
13 challenges in Hawaii, particularly the high cost of living and
14 operation, emphasizes the need for substantial startup support.

15 The legislature commits to transforming the State's tourism
16 sector into a regenerative, sustainable model that benefits the



1 local community, setting a precedent for sustainable tourism
2 development worldwide.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to establish
4 Lahaina, Maui, as a leader in regenerative tourism, promoting a
5 model that is environmentally sustainable, culturally enriching,
6 and economically beneficial, with scalability for statewide
7 application in Hawaii.

8 SECTION 2. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by
9 adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read
10 as follows:

11 "CHAPTER

12 REGENERATIVE TOURISM

13 § -1 **Definitions.** For purposes of this chapter:

14 "Department" means the department of business, economic
15 development, and tourism.

16 "Environmental disaster mitigation" means strategies to
17 reduce the impact of natural disasters, that focus on
18 environmental and community protection, and that adopt the
19 recommendations of the Hawaii emergency management agency
20 regarding creating an initial plan for the local community
21 response.



1 "Local community" includes residents and indigenous groups
2 in and around the area of the member.

3 "Member" means a business accepted for membership in the
4 program under -2(b) and in good standing with the program.

5 "Program" means the regenerative tourism program
6 established under -2(a).

7 "Regenerative tourism" means tourism practices that
8 contribute to the restoration and enhancement of local
9 ecosystems, adhere to sustainable practices, respect and
10 preserve local culture, and support the local community.

11 "Sustainable practices" means methods ensuring the
12 long-term sustainability of natural and cultural resources based
13 on input from the local community, input from cultural
14 practitioners, and historical information.

15 § -2 **Regenerative tourism program; established.** (a)

16 There is established the regenerative tourism program within the
17 department. The purpose of the program shall be to help
18 restructure the tourism industry to support regenerative
19 tourism.

20 (b) The department shall accept for membership into the
21 program any business that satisfies the following requirements:



- 1 (1) A principal owner of the business has been a resident
2 of Hawaii for not less than ten years;
- 3 (2) The business enters into a community benefit
4 agreement;
- 5 (3) The business demonstrates cultural integration and
6 engagement by ensuring that Hawaiian cultural values
7 are integrated into the business's operation and
8 services;
- 9 (4) Is in good standing with the department; and
- 10 (5) Any other requirement specified by the department.
- 11 (c) The program shall:
- 12 (1) Provide mentorship, training, and resources to
13 members;
- 14 (2) Assist members to provide their customers with a
15 sustainable and culturally aware tourism experience;
- 16 (3) Assist members to develop and implement environmental
17 disaster mitigation;
- 18 (4) Assist members to develop and implement
19 environmentally friendly practices and disaster
20 resilience;



1 (5) Include the names of the members on the department's
2 tourism website;

3 (6) Encourage each member to advertise membership in the
4 program in the member's promotional materials; and

5 (7) Allow members to apply for grants from the
6 regenerative tourism grant program.

7 (c) The department may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 91
8 for the purposes of this chapter.

9 § -3 **Regenerative tourism grant program.** (a) There is
10 established within the program the regenerative tourism grant
11 program. Grants shall be awarded from funds in the regenerative
12 tourism special fund and shall be subject to available funds.
13 Grants shall be awarded on a one-to-one basis for each dollar
14 contributed by the member, subject to the maximum amounts
15 established by this section.

16 (b) The program shall award initial grants to members who
17 present a business plan that would help the member implement
18 regenerative tourism. The maximum initial grant to each member
19 shall be \$10,000.

20 (c) Five years after an initial grant to a member, the
21 program shall award an expansion grant to a member if the member



1 demonstrates adherence to regenerative tourism and a fifty per
2 cent increase in business, compared to the year of the
3 application made in subsection (b). The maximum expansion grant
4 to each member shall be \$15,000.

5 **§ -4 Regenerative tourism special fund.** (a) There is
6 established within the department the regenerative tourism
7 special fund into which shall be deposited the following moneys:

8 (1) Appropriations by the legislature to the special fund;
9 and

10 (2) Gifts, donations, and grants from public agencies and
11 private persons.

12 (b) All interest earned or accrued on moneys deposited in
13 the fund shall become part of the fund. The fund shall be
14 administered by the department.

15 (c) Subject to legislative authorization, the department
16 may expend moneys from the fund for the regenerative tourism
17 grant program and to cover administrative and operational costs
18 of the program."

19 SECTION 3. In accordance with section 9 of article VII, of
20 the Constitution of the State of Hawaii and sections 37-91 and
21 37-93, Hawaii Revised Statutes, the legislature has determined



1 that the appropriations contained in this Act will cause the
2 state general fund expenditure ceiling for fiscal year 2024-2025
3 to be exceeded by \$, or per cent. The
4 reasons for exceeding the general fund expenditure ceiling are
5 that the appropriations made in this Act are necessary to serve
6 the public interest and to meet the needs provided for by this
7 Act.

8 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the general
9 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
10 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for
11 deposit into the regenerative tourism special fund.

12 SECTION 5. There is appropriated out of the regenerative
13 tourism special fund the sum of \$ or so much thereof
14 as may be necessary for fiscal year 2024-2025 for the
15 regenerative tourism program.

16 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
17 business, economic development, and tourism for the purposes of
18 this Act.

19 SECTION 6. The department of business, economic
20 development, and tourism shall implement the regenerative
21 tourism program on a phased basis starting in an area that



1 sustained not less than an estimated \$1,000,000,000 in damages
2 from wildfires during 2023.

3 SECTION 7. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2024.

4

INTRODUCED BY:

Elle Cochran

JAN 19 2024



H.B. NO. 2104

Report Title:

Regenerative Tourism; DBEDT; Program; Grant; Appropriation;
General Fund Expenditure Ceiling Exceeded

Description:

Establishes the regenerative tourism program with the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to increase regenerative tourism. Establishes a grant program. Appropriates moneys. Declares that the appropriation exceeds the state general fund expenditure ceiling for 2024-2025.

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