



Ke'ena Kuleana Ho'okipa O Hawai'i
Hawai'i Convention Center
1801 Kalākāua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815
kelepona tel 808 973 2255
kelepa'i fax 808 973 2253
kahua pa'a web hawaii tourismauthority.org

Josh Green, M.D.
Governor

John De Fries
President and Chief Executive Officer

Statement of
JOHN DE FRIES
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
**COMMITTEES ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM
AND AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT**

Wednesday, February 15, 2023
1:00 p.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SENATE BILL NO. 636
RELATING TO THE ENVIRONMENT

Aloha Chairs DeCoite and Gabbard, Vice Chairs Wakai and Richards, and members of the Committees on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism and Agriculture and Environment.

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments in support of the intent of SB636, to collect fees to fund the protection, restoration, enhancement, care, and increased resilience of Hawai'i's natural and outdoor recreational resources.

The ethic of mālama – care and stewardship – is the core of our visitor education efforts. HTA's work is framed by four interacting strategic pillars: Natural Resources, Hawaiian Culture, Community, and Branding – the last of which is dependent upon the strength of the first three. Hawai'i's environment is a treasure, and it is our collective kuleana to protect it for the generations to come. Fulfilling that responsibility takes funding. We agree with the intent of this legislation as it is in alignment with our Strategic Plan priorities in the Natural Resources pillar, as well as action items in our community-generated Destination Management Action Plans.

We have consistently been supportive of site-specific user fees as our preferred model, but whichever model this 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 SB636, stand ready to assist in educating visitor industry stakeholders and visitors, will gladly participate in the Environmental Legacy Commission, and 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.