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Governor

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Statement of
JOHN DE FRIES
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
COMMITTEE ON WATER AND LAND

Monday, March 13, 2023
1:00 p.m.
State Capitol Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HOUSE BILL NO. 1394 HD1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Aloha Chair Inouye, Vice Chair Elefante, and Members of the Committee on Water and Land,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to offer comments on HB1394 HD1, which appropriates funds to the Department of Land and Natural Resources for operating costs and personnel to manage certain trailheads as part of the Nā Ala Hele trail and access program.

HTA's message to prospective visitors around the world is **Mālama Hawai'i**: an invitation for them to join kama'āina in caring for our beloved home. Setting that intention and expectation, combined with robust visitor education through all stages of the journey, is our strategy to target and welcome visitors who prioritize the environment and being mindful guests – all key to achieving our goal of a regenerative model of tourism through destination management.

An important component of visitor education where we must continue to build capacity is in-person stewardship of sensitive sites like the trails for which the Department of Land and Natural Resources is responsible. We appreciate the Legislature's consideration of this need, which was articulated by community members across Hawai'i in the Destination Management Action Plans for each county.

We appreciate the opportunity to offer these comments on the intent of HB1394 HD1, and defer to our colleagues at the Department of Land and Natural Resources on matters related to the implementation of this measure including their recommendations on funding levels provided in testimony. Mahalo.