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Public Input Sought to Shape Governance of Tourism in Hawai'i

HONOLULU – A team engaged by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) is conducting research on how Hawai'i can shape the governance of the state's tourism industry for long-term success. As a part of this process, Better Destinations is seeking input from the community, stakeholders and visitor industry representatives throughout the state.

"Tourism remains our state's top economic driver, fostering jobs and career growth for kama'āina and ensuring the well-being of our communities," said Mufi Hannemann, HTA board chair. "We are not resting on our laurels. We must continue to evaluate our current systems, adapt to improve efficiencies, and plan ahead to sustain a vibrant industry and future Hawai'i."

To provide the public with information about the governance study process underway, a website has been launched at <https://hawaiiitourismgovernance.com>. It includes an online survey for the public to provide their input. Anyone who has an interest in Hawai'i tourism is invited to take the survey and share their thoughts on the most important considerations for structuring the management of tourism.

"This effort to gather diverse viewpoints is just the first step in the process," said Stephanie Iona, HTA board member and co-chair of the governance study permitted interaction group. "With the valuable insights we receive from our community, decision makers, industry stakeholders, and leaders across Hawai'i, the HTA board and our team will work to build a stronger, more regenerative tourism model for our sustainable future."

"We are bringing together local and global expertise to explore possibilities for creating a strong, responsive system of governance of Hawai'i tourism," said Cathy Ritter, founder and CEO of Better Destinations LLC. "Most importantly, we are engaging with the true experts — those who have an interest in the future of Hawai'i tourism — to identify the best approach for providing long-term guidance and support for a regenerative tourism economy that benefits people and communities across Hawai'i."

Better Destinations is collaborating with Maui-based Karey Kapoi LLC to secure a wide range of input and participation in the study. The consulting team also includes Place Generation co-founders Frank Cuypers and Elke Dens, as well as Denise Miller, executive vice president for SMARInsights, a leading tourism research firm.

Set to be delivered in May, the study aims to determine whether an alternative tourism governance system is necessary, identify areas that need reform, and propose policy ideas and modifications to HTA's Hawai'i Revised Statutes, Chapter 201B, to ensure better governance. The study will also identify the organizational structure required to support the strategic direction.

Better Destinations has already commenced engagement with tourism leaders and operators, government decision-makers, and representatives of community and cultural organizations on O'ahu, Kaua'i, Maui and the island of Hawai'i. The team is also conducting interviews and meetings with HTA staff, board members, and stakeholders. A situation analysis will be shared in April describing the findings of desktop research, U.S. and international case studies of destination governance, interviews and workshops, and initial survey findings.

“The information gathered through this study will be instrumental in strategically managing tourism for the betterment of Hawai‘i’s people and communities throughout the state,” said Daniel Nāho‘opi‘i, HTA’s interim president and CEO. “This work of tailoring a governance structure that is designed specifically for Hawai‘i and our community’s needs is a large undertaking, and we encourage all residents to participate.”

For more information about the governance study, visit <https://hawaiitourismgovernance.com>.

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About the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority

The Hawai‘i Tourism Authority is the state agency responsible for representing The Hawaiian Islands around the world, and for holistically managing tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with community desires, economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, and visitor industry needs. HTA works with the community and industry to Mālama Hawai‘i – care for our beloved home. For more information about HTA, visit hawaiitourismauthority.org or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), Threads and [Twitter](#).

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