



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Governor

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 19, 2012

Statement attributable to Mike McCartney, President and CEO Hawai'i Tourism Authority

Regarding President Obama's Travel and Tourism Announcement

Today's announcement by President Obama to increase travel and tourism in the United States will be highly beneficial to Hawai'i's tourism economy and advance efforts to help provide up to an estimated 154,000 jobs. With 2.4 million international visitors arriving in our state each year, Honolulu is the fifth busiest U.S. point-of-entry. The President's Executive Order will ease access for international travelers to visit our Hawaiian Islands as well as the rest of the United States.

China is an emerging market for Hawai'i's tourism industry with unprecedented growth potential. Arrivals are expected to reach 125,394 in 2012, up 28 percent over 2011, with Chinese visitors spending \$380 per person per day, higher than any other market. The President's initiatives to increase the number of Chinese visas processed and ensuring that visa applicants are interviewed within three weeks are huge milestones for Chinese tourism to the U.S. and Hawai'i.

Visa waiver status for Taiwan is another significant milestone for our industry. Following the Visa Waiver Program with Korea in 2008, arrivals from the region increased 35 percent and has grown year-after-year. And we would anticipate seeing similar growth out of Taiwan.

We have seen considerable growth from Asia and today's announcement will help us continue with this momentum following the world-wide attention on our state during the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). We also believe that our Hawai'i Business Roundtable meeting with U.S. Commerce Secretary John Bryson during APEC Leaders' Week and HTA's involvement with the U.S. Travel Association also contributed to quick action by President Obama on this Travel and Tourism initiative. Hawai'i's strategic location connecting the Asia-Pacific region also provides visitors from Asia a close point-of-entry into the United States.

These efforts will further establish our state as a global destination and benefit our state's economy. Tourism continues to be the largest generator of jobs in Hawai'i and these initiatives will help to stimulate job growth for our residents. To view the full White House news release please visit <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/01/19/we-can-t-wait-president-obama-takes-actions-increase-travel-and-tourism->

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