



For Immediate Release: December 22, 2023
HTA Release (23-57)

Hawai'i Tourism Authority Board Approves Action Plan to Support Maui's Recovery in 2024

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) Board of Directors has furthered its ongoing commitment to mālama Maui and support the island's recovery by approving an immediate six-month action plan for 2024 to help address major challenges confronting residents, small businesses, visitor industry providers, Maui's economy, and families seeking housing.

The action plan is designed to fulfill tourism's responsibilities in alliance with the leadership established by Governor Josh Green, M.D. and within the broader scope of Maui's recovery efforts being conducted by the State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) and other state agencies. HTA's full report identifying major strategies and not only short-term but also mid- and long-term recommendations will be provided to DBEDT in their role coordinating the State's Economic Recovery Support Functions.

HTA Board Chair Mufi Hannemann noted the 2024 plan balances the critical needs of getting Maui's economy back on track for the benefit of workers and families, with the sensitivity that efforts undertaken by HTA will not compromise Maui's principles. "A tremendous amount of thought and listening to people and businesses throughout Maui has gone into the development of this overarching plan, which will guide HTA forward in the coming year," said Chair Hannemann. "We will be flexible and make necessary adjustments throughout the year to ensure the programs and innovations that HTA puts forth are timely and geared to encourage future success. We are hopeful Maui's tourism industry will begin seeing positive results soon, but the reality is that this plan is intended to heighten interest among mindful travelers about Maui throughout all of 2024 and beyond."

Building on the initial Mālama Maui campaign that HTA has been implementing in the wake of the August 8 wildfires, HTA's plan for 2024 focuses on seven key strategic areas with the following top actions to help revitalize Maui's economy and improve the outlook for residents.

- **Increase the visibility and call-to-action for travel to Hawai'i targeting high-potential markets** through Maui recovery marketing programs emphasizing Mālama Maui in the U.S. and Canada.
- **Support businesses in maintaining a consistent message that Maui is open for visitors** by enhancing the GoHawaii.com website and app with additional information highlighting that Maui is open, and helping to subsidize booth space or participation fees at road shows or travel trade events geared toward travel advisors who book travel.
- **Develop local messaging sharing that many Maui residents want to return to full-time work and that it provides a path to meaningful economic recovery.** The messaging will be amplified through television, radio and social media, reaching Maui residents, visitor industry stakeholders, and businesses.
- **Increase post-arrival Mālama Hawai'i visitor communication and education efforts**, and develop messaging that is more Maui site-specific and addresses some of the post-wildfire changes.

- **Support Maui small businesses experiencing significant sales reductions due to fewer visitors** by providing funding support for Maui Made markets on-island through the County of Maui and promoting Maui Made products during U.S. West Coast saturation campaigns.
- **Expand Maui’s tourism product to support local businesses and provide new visitor activities** by creating opportunities that allow travelers to explore different areas of Maui that are open to visitors and supporting capacity-building for small businesses.
- **Support longer-term housing for wildfire-impacted households living in visitor accommodations** by increasing communication with out-of-state transient vacation rental owners encouraging them to rent to displaced Lahaina residents.

HTA Board Vice Chair Mahina Paishon emphasized that the immediate and long-term well-being of Maui’s residents and families will continue to be a top priority with HTA’s plan. “We fully understand the uncertainty and worry that many residents are feeling about their future with Maui’s recovery and appreciate everyone for sharing their mana’o,” said Vice Chair Paishon. “A main objective of our work will be to make sure that HTA is supportive and mindful of the sentiments within the community and properly addressing concerns raised by residents about tourism’s role in Maui’s recovery.”

HTA Interim President and CEO Daniel Nāho’opi’i said HTA is taking a holistic view as to how Maui will be shared globally, noting that the input received from Maui residents, nonprofits and businesses is serving as the foundation for messaging and public outreach efforts. This includes comments shared at a December 4 community meeting on Maui attended by more than 200 residents, input from over 100 individuals submitted online, and dozens of additional meetings with Maui business and community leaders.

The work to support the programs in this newly-approved action plan will be executed primarily by its existing contractors, in addition to their existing responsibilities on behalf of the State of Hawai’i.

“Our team is moving quickly, efficiently and effectively to maximize our efforts to highlight Maui and all the Hawaiian Islands as a top-of-mind destination for travelers in 2024,” said Nāho’opi’i. “We are often asked by travel providers and visitors what they can do to help support Maui. Our answer is always the same – come to Maui with respect and compassion, and enjoy your time on the island.”

Nāho’opi’i added that HTA has identified four key measurable outcomes for the implementation of its 2024 plan, summarized as follows:

- Encourage pono, mindful travel and increase the number of travelers who intend to visit the island in 2024 and 2025.
- Grow the tourism economy statewide with more visitors coming to all the Hawaiian Islands in 2024, which will boost the state’s economy and support Maui’s recovery.
- Ensure that Maui residents continue to be included in the discussion about tourism’s recovery.
- Fill more visitor industry jobs and increase employment in collaboration with other departments and agencies.

“Tourism has an important role in bolstering Maui’s economic recovery, which supports businesses and allows many residents to provide for their families,” said Nāho’opi’i. “Working with Governor Green, DBEDT, the Legislature, and our board of directors, we look forward to HTA continuing to re-establish the significance of Maui as a destination for travelers from around the world in 2024.”

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 hawaii tourism authority.org or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), Threads and [Twitter](#).

For more information, contact:

T. Ilihia Gionson
Public Affairs Officer
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
Ilihia.Gionson@gohta.net