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Statement by George D. Szigeti, President and CEO, Hawai'i Tourism Authority

RE: Hawai'i's Visitor Statistics Results for August 2018

HONOLULU – George D. Szigeti, president and CEO of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), issued the following comments on Hawai'i's visitor statistics results for the month of August and year-to-date.

“Although both visitor spending and arrivals increased in August compared to a year ago, we expected better results for this peak travel month. Hurricane Lane deterred a segment of travelers from staying in the Hawaiian Islands, which was compounded by the continuing negative effect Kīlauea volcano had on the island of Hawai'i.

“The 1.4 percent increase in visitor spending for August was the lowest of any month since May 2016. Additionally, the \$1.41 billion in total visitor spending was the lowest of any month so far this year. These figures are a reminder as to how vulnerable tourism can be to events beyond our control and why we can never assume the impressive rates of growth Hawai'i was achieving the first half of this year will continue unabated for the foreseeable future.

“Despite the challenges of Kīlauea volcano and Hurricane Lane, the State of Hawai'i realized a good summer travel season, as combined visitor spending for the months of June, July and August totaled \$4.67 billion, an increase of 5.5 percent, with visitor arrivals reaching nearly 2.7 million, an increase of 5.3 percent.

“Through the first eight months of 2018, Hawai'i continued to pace well ahead of last year's record-setting totals with visitor spending at \$12.34 billion, up by 8.8 percent, and visitor arrivals close to 6.8 million, an increase of 7.2 percent. In addition to the monies circulated by visitors throughout all islands, \$1.44 billion in state tax revenue has been generated thus far in 2018, an increase of \$116.4 million over last year.

“The resiliency, professionalism and, most of all, aloha spirit displayed by Hawai'i's tourism workers toward our visitors during times of crisis, is both appreciated and admired. Mahalo to our entire tourism workforce for always making the Hawaiian Islands such a warm and welcoming destination.”

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