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## **Hawaii Tourism Authority President & CEO Chris Tatum Announces His Retirement**

**HONOLULU** – After a 40-year career dedicated to serving the hospitality industry and working to make a positive difference for Hawaii, Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) President & CEO Chris Tatum announced he's retiring. His last day at HTA will be August 31.

Tatum was appointed to the top tourism position for the State of Hawaii in December 2018 after a 37-year career with Marriott International.

Under his leadership, HTA established Hawaii's direction for tourism's future in the coming years with its 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. HTA is putting an increased focus on destination management, which includes investing more time and money in programs that support the community, perpetuate the Hawaiian culture, and protect Hawaii's natural resources. He also advocated for workplace development in tourism to provide local students with career opportunities in hospitality.



"I'm very proud of the HTA team and our refocused plans to develop a balanced strategy for tourism. With active collaboration from the community, we need to create a sustainable industry that is respectful of the culture and protects our environment for future generations. I plan to spend the next three months working with the HTA board on the transition and supporting the state's recovery efforts," Tatum said.

HTA Board Chair Rick Fried commented, "Chris is smart, candid, always puts the residents of Hawaii first, and, most importantly to me, is unfailingly honest. When he asked to come to my office on Monday, I assumed it was just to discuss various HTA matters as we often do. After a few minutes of talking he handed me a brown envelope with his resignation letter and explained his thinking. I deal with many sad cases, but I teared up when it became clear his decision was final."

HTA Chief Administrative Officer Keith Regan said, "It has been such a blessing to have had the opportunity to work alongside Chris. From the first day, he displayed all the great qualities you'd expect from a true leader. Besides his decisive and passionate approach, what I've really appreciated has been his willingness to share, teach, and mentor those around him has elevated the whole organization. He has placed HTA on the right footing, focused on balance and sustainability. We owe him a true debt of gratitude and I, for one, am truly indebted to him for his incredible leadership."

Prior to joining HTA, his experience included executive leadership positions on the U.S. mainland, in Asia, Australia, and Hawaii. His career started as a housekeeping houseman at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel during his summers home from college.

Tatum moved to Hawaii with his family in 1965, when his father Lon was a member of the U.S. Air Force, and his mother Bette was a teacher. He's a proud graduate of Radford High School. The Tatum family fell in love with the islands and made Hawaii their lifelong home. Before her passing in 2017, Bette was a well-respected leader in the business community as executive director of the

National Federation of Small Business for the State of Hawai'i. Lon retired from the military and supported Bette's career until his passing in 2010. Tatum's brother Lonnie was a very successful owner of a recreational vehicle dealership in Washington State until his passing in 2004.

Tatum and his wife Peg, who have been married for 28 years, plan to relocate to Colorado to begin the next stage of their lives.

"After 40 years in a 24/7 industry, I'm looking forward to traveling with Peg and spending quality time with my daughter Sam and son Alex. I'm blessed to have grown up and raised our kids in the islands and Hawai'i will always be our home."

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**Editor's Note:** Click [here](#) to download Chris Tatum's head shot.

### **About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority**

The [Hawai'i Tourism Authority](#) is the State of Hawai'i agency responsible for strategically managing its support of the tourism industry. Established in 1998 to support Hawai'i's leading industry and largest employer, HTA continually strives to help ensure tourism's sustainability and the benefits it brings to residents and communities statewide. Follow updates about HTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) (@HawaiiHTA).

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