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HTA Welcomes Five New Members to its Board of Directors

HONOLULU – The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) is pleased to announce the appointments of five new members to serve on its Board of Directors – hospitality and community leader Kimberly Leimomi Agas, social entrepreneur Mahina Duarte, Kaua'i community affairs specialist Stephanie Iona, Hawai'i Island agriculturist James McCully, and Maui hotelier and government relations veteran Michael White.

“This dynamic group of appointees complements HTA’s diverse board as we accelerate efforts toward a regenerative model of tourism centered around the needs of our community,” said HTA President and CEO John De Fries. “Balancing the well-being of our people and place with meaningful economic, environmental and cultural benefits is essential to our state’s recovery.”

HTA’s Board of Directors is a policy-making entity comprised of members appointed by the Governor of Hawai'i and confirmed by the Hawai'i State Senate. Board members serve as volunteers, guiding HTA’s work in holistically managing tourism and fulfilling HTA’s 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and interacting pillars – community, natural resources, Hawaiian culture, and branding.

The new HTA board members’ terms commenced on July 1, 2022 and will end on June 30, 2026. They replace outgoing board members Micah Alameda, Fred Atkins, Daniel Chun, Kyoko Kimura, and Kimi Yuen.

“We appreciate and thank our board members for their dedication, hard work and service with aloha to our communities,” said George Kam, HTA board chair. “Their contributions are far-reaching, from the creation of our current Strategic Plan to assisting with the development of our Destination Management Action Plans for each island.”

Kimberly Leimomi Agas is the general manager of Aulani, A Disney Resort & Spa in Ko Olina, where she oversees resort operations and community, stakeholder, and owner partnerships. A seasoned hospitality management executive with more than 35 years of experience, she previously served in leadership positions at Outrigger Resorts in Hawai'i and French Polynesia. Agas was educated at Kamehameha Schools, Hawai'i Pacific University, and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She has also served on the Bishop Museum Advisory Council Board and Honolulu Zoological Society Board, and continues to serve on the board of the Hawai'i Lodging and Tourism Association.

Mahina Paishon Duarte co-founded Waiwai Collective in 2016, a social enterprise that blends culture, community and commerce to achieve well-being and abundance outcomes for Hawai'i and beyond. Previously, she served as Kanu o ka 'Āina's head of school for the secondary level and Hālau Kū Māna. Co-author of the 'Āina Aloha Economic Futures

declaration, Duarte has worked with various cultural and community organizations throughout Hawai'i. She has earned a number of degrees from local universities to cultivate her unique skill set to serve Hawai'i through ancestral knowledge and lifeways.

Stephanie Iona specializes in community and government affairs on Kaua'i. She has five decades of experience serving Hawai'i's communities, primarily in the agriculture and hospitality industries. She currently provides community affairs services to Kaua'i Shrimp and the Kekaha Agriculture Association. Previously, she was the community and government affairs manager for Dow Agrosiences. Iona has also served as the general manager of Waimea Plantation Cottages as well as Aston Papakea Resort.

James McCully has been self-employed in the agriculture industry as an orchid breeder at Mauna Kea Orchids on Hawai'i Island since 1976. For more than 20 years, he has also specialized in real estate management, encompassing greenfield entitlements, subdivisions, land use actions, public and private infrastructure development, and conservation projects. McCully is a member of the American Orchid Society's Hilo Chapter.

Michael White is the general manager of Kā'anapali Beach Hotel and The Plantation Inn on Maui. He was influenced by Kenneth Brown, Winona Rubin and Gard Kealoha in developing Kā'anapali Beach Hotel's Po'okela Program with Dr. George Kanahale. A seasoned business and community leader with five decades of hospitality industry experience on Maui and Hawai'i Island, White also served as a Maui County Council member and chair representing Makawao, Ha'ikū and Pā'ia, and State House of Representative for West Maui, Moloka'i, Lāna'i, and Kaho'olawe. A graduate of Punahou School, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Hospitality Management from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's School of Travel Industry Management.

The new members are attending their first regular monthly board meeting today. For more information, visit www.hawaii-tourism-authority.org/who-we-are/board-of-directors/.

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New Board Member Head Shots:

<https://finnpartners.box.com/s/1ze1sa7uv4w7g3xvirc40i2t3wfq3pjl>

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 Ku'u Home – care for our beloved home. For more information about HTA, visit www.hawaii-tourism-authority.org or follow @HawaiiHTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

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