



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association Hosts 8th Annual Visitor Public Safety Conference**

**Honolulu, Hawai'i — December 10, 2025** — The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA), in partnership with the Visitor Aloha Society of Hawai'i (VASH), the Hawai'i Hotel Visitor Industry Security Association (HHVISA), the Waikiki Improvement Association (WIA), and the Waikiki Business Improvement District (WBID), will host the **8th Annual Visitor Public Safety Conference** on Wednesday, January 7, 2026, from 7:15 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Ala Moana Hotel.

This annual event brings together leaders in tourism, law enforcement, emergency management, and community organizations to address critical safety issues affecting Hawai'i's visitors, residents, and workforce. The conference provides a platform for collaborative discussions, innovative solutions, and actionable strategies to enhance public safety across the islands.

Mufi Hannemann, President and CEO of HLTA, shared:

*"Hawai'i's tourism industry thrives when visitors feel safe and welcome. For nearly a decade, this conference has been an opportunity for our community, coalition partners, and key government officials to share best practices, strengthen the systems, and work collaboratively to protect both residents and visitors alike. Every conference we have had has resulted in positive and productive outcomes, and we look forward to the results of our upcoming session."*

#### **Conference Schedule:**

**Emcee:** Rick Hamada, Host, The Rick Hamada Program News Radio 830 KHVH

**Check in 7:15 AM**

## **Breakfast 7:30 AM**

### **Opening Remarks 8:00-8:45 AM**

- Mufi Hannemann, President and CEO, HLTA
- Mayor Rick Blangiardi, City and County of Honolulu
- Prosecutor Steve Alm, Prosecuting Attorney, City and County of Honolulu
- Rade Vanic, Interim Chief of Police, Honolulu Police Department (HPD)

### **Emergency Management 8:50-9:50 AM**

*Moderator:* Rick Egged, President, WIA

*Panelists:*

- Jennifer Walter, Deputy Director, Department of Emergency Management
- Jerry Dolak, Director of Safety and Security, Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort; President, HHVISA
- John Vierra, Community Outreach Lead, Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency
- Thomas Foti, General Manager, Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa and Sheraton Princess Kaiulani Waikiki Beach

### **Safety Solutions via Technology 9:55-10:40 AM**

*Talk Story Session*

- Mike Lambert, Director of Law Enforcement, Department of Law Enforcement
- Trevor Abarzua, President and Executive Director, WBID

### **Financial Crimes Against Visitors 10:45-11:45 AM**

*Moderator:* Rick Hamada

*Panelists:*

- Detective Gregg Kawamoto, Financial Fraud Division, HPD
- Jessica Lani Rich, President and CEO, VASH
- Ken Sorenson, United States District Attorney
- Lieutenant Daniel Jasco, HPD
- Lieutenant Ioane Keehu, Financial Crimes Division, Criminal Investigation Division, HPD

### **Closing Remarks 11:45-12:00 PM**

The conference underscores Hawai'i's commitment to ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for visitors while supporting the local workforce. Attendees will gain valuable insights into emerging safety trends, collaborative solutions, and innovative technology that enhance visitor protection across the islands.

### **Quotes from partners:**

*"Regardless of the type of emergency—whether a hurricane, tsunami, or long-term power outage—Waikīkī will always face the same critical challenge: access to food, water, and diesel fuel. The district simply does not have the storage capacity to sustain these essential supplies for more than a few days. Our resilience depends on rapid resupply and strong coordination among hotels, government agencies, and private partners."*

— Jerry Dolak, Director of Safety and Security, Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort; President, HHVISA

*"Financial crimes against our visitors can ruin a Hawaii dream vacation and affect tourism, our number one industry. Some of the crimes include beach and car thefts taking valuables and identification, as well as online scams asking visitors to wire money for vacation rentals that don't exist. Solutions to these issues and more are important to any traveler to prevent financial crimes from happening."*

— Jessica Lani Rich, President & CEO, Visitor Aloha Society of Hawai'i

*"The safety of our residents, guests, and staff are what is most important. Current plans are not adequate to ensure their security. We must do better!"*

— Rick Egged, President, Waikiki Improvement Association

*"Waikiki has always been a world-class destination, and now we're making sure our public safety infrastructure meets that same standard. This fireside chat with Director Mike Lambert from the State's Department of Public Safety is an opportunity to share how the Waikiki Business Improvement District is embracing 21st-century technology—deploying smarter, faster, and more effective tools like camera systems, drone support, license plate readers, and noise detection equipment—to better protect visitors, workers, and residents. Our goal is simple: to set a new national standard for what modern, visitor-focused public safety looks like."*

— Trevor Abarzua, President & Executive Director, WBID

### **Registration and Information:**

For more details and to register for the Visitor Public Safety Conference, please visit [our website](#).

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## **About HLTA**

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) is a non-profit, statewide trade organization representing lodging properties, owners, management companies, suppliers, and affiliated businesses. Established in 1947, HLTA's mission is to promote education, advocacy, and philanthropy within Hawai'i's hospitality sector. It remains the state's largest and oldest private sector tourism organization, dedicated to supporting Hawai'i's tourism workforce and fostering industry excellence.

## **MEDIA CONTACT:**

Ayami Sato

Director of Communications and Programs, Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association

Email: [asato@hawaiilodging.org](mailto:asato@hawaiilodging.org)

Phone: 808-923-0407