



**HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM**  
**A S S O C I A T I O N**

January 25, 2022

The Honorable David Y. Ige  
Governor, State of Hawai'i  
Executive Chambers  
State Capitol  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Aloha Governor Ige,

Congratulations on your final State of the State address. As a former public servant, I connected with and appreciated the emotion that shone through in your remarks and wanted to share that with you.

Over the past several weeks, there have been rumblings that the State is soon to announce changes to the Safe Travels program that will require a COVID-19 booster shot for incoming travelers to qualify for the vaccination exception. As you know, HLTA has been an outspoken proponent of vaccination and the booster shot, and we have pushed not only our members, but also our families, friends, and colleagues to get vaccinated and boosted as soon as these options became available. Despite this, we feel strongly that there will be outsized repercussions for the visitor industry and, by extension, the entire local economy if we place further travel requirements on prospective travelers, and we would like to request that you delay any announcement for at least 7 days and meet with members of our association via Zoom in the interim.

At the time of writing this letter, the Omicron variant has already peaked in several hotspots both overseas and domestically. As we have experienced in the past, Hawai'i's COVID-19 case counts lags several weeks behind other locales. Locally, we have seen a steep drop in the number of new cases between Jan. 18—when 6,252 new cases were reported—and today when just 1,904 cases were reported. Considering this data, one could hypothesize that we are also on the downturn of this latest surge and are well on our way back to the low COVID-19 numbers that we have generally experienced throughout this pandemic.

Delaying any announcement of new requirements would allow time for case counts to continue to decrease and would also provide time for you to meet with members of our association so that we may share with you our concerns and suggestions surrounding the requirement of a booster shot. If you would prefer to have a more wide-ranging group of stakeholders attend the meeting, I would be happy to pull together a small select group of our Hawai'i Tourism, Business, &

Community Coalition with whom you have met several times in the past. If you are able to meet with us, please let me know and we will coordinate the meeting at your convenience.

If you have any questions or concerns or would like to discuss this issue further, please feel free to call or contact me at any time at [mhannemann@hawaiilodging.org](mailto:mhannemann@hawaiilodging.org).

Sincerely,  
Mufi