

HAWAII LODGING & TOURISM
A S S O C I A T I O N

- 1) The future of tourism in Hawai'i Despite tourism's status as one of our state's top economic drivers, the COVID-19 pandemic has led some to call for our economy to diversify away from tourism. HLTA's longstanding position has been that our economy should look to diversify within tourism, i.e., develop and expand industries that complement tourism. Would you support this policy given the challenge of identifying industries that could immediately replace the number of jobs and revenue tourism generates for our state's economy? If not, what are your proposals for diversification?

I totally support the diversification within our tourism industry to develop, expand and work on solutions to complement and continue to support tourism.

- 2) Tourism Management HLTA has long maintained that we believe in the "quality" tourism model rather than the "quantity" tourism model. Effective execution of this responsible management model takes many forms, one being the establishment of user impact fees at popular visitor attractions such as Oahu's Hanauma Bay. Do you support user impact fees? Do you have other ideas that would embrace this model?

I believe in the "quality" vs. "quantity" tourism model which offers our visitors the best experience that our State offers. With this wonderful experience comes various costs and impact fees that I support. User impact fee's compliments the visitor experience and continues to support our local economy.

- 3) Real Property Tax Hotels and lodgings historically have been among the highest real property taxpayers in all counties, paying from \$10.70 to \$13.90 per \$1,000 of assessed value. In FY2019-2020 alone, hotels were seven of the top ten taxpayers based on the amount of taxes levied. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, hotels have already come due on one installment of real property taxes, even though many of them have not generated revenue since March. As our industry looks to recover from the pandemic, will you oppose any increase in real property taxes over the next three years? Five years?

We are in this together and we need to continue to be resilient and look forward to a recovery that will probably shift our normal way of doing business. There will always be a cost to support the visitor industry and I believe real property taxes is and will always be part that equation however, I do not support an increase in real property

taxes at this time. I look forward to working together in finding solutions in bringing more resources and options to our visitor industry especially during these very challenging times.

- 4) Transient Vacation Rentals HLTA's position has always been one of fairness, i.e., legal TVRs such as those on Airbnb or VRBO should be allowed to operate in areas that have been zoned for resorts so long as the property owner pays the real property taxes associated with a resort property, as well as the GET and TAT. Where do you stand on this issue? Would you support a measure to increase enforcement to rein in the proliferation of properties that are operating illegally? Moreover, would you support an increase in the amount of the fine assessed to illegal operators?

Transient Vacation Rentals belong in the Visitor Destination Areas (VDA) throughout our State. Enforcement of this law is imperative as we continue to support the visitor industry at all levels. Any violation of this is unacceptable and therefore the increase of enforcement and the increase of fines should be discussed and implemented.

- 5) Homelessness Solutions In recent years, HLTA has dedicated significant time and resources to address homelessness in our community. In addition to funds generated through our Visitor Industry Charity Walk, we secured \$1 million in State matching funds that we used to subsidize the efforts of homeless service providers around the state. Please provide a detailed description of an initiative that you would implement to address homelessness in your county. In order to really address the Homeless "pandemic too", I believe we need to find ways to truly find solutions with "resources" and "support" from all levels of business, government, community as we address to issue together.

I believe there are four areas of our homeless community that needs attention:

1) The Houseless Community (example): The single mom who works with two children that go to school and they live in their car. She needs a safe place to park at night with access to a restroom and shower! (Possible Solution): Work with our faith-based community to allow her to park on church property with access to restroom and showers. Work with the church congregation on supporting this family with future sheltering etc.

2) The Hopeful Community (example): Mental Health is a major part of our homeless community and we need to work with our Department of Health and deploy mental health teams to go out into the homeless community and conduct assessments of our mental health community. We need to go out! We cannot expect these people to come in and I believe this would give us a better understanding of what their true needs are and what services this part of our community would qualify for.

3) The Homebound Community (example): Many of our homeless community come to Hawaii from different States and even different parts of the world because they are either just sent here or choose to come to visit because of our year-round weather conditions and open environment. Many come on a one-way ticket and this is where our local business community can possibly provide support through a voucher program. The homebound voucher program would provide a one-way ticket back home and to qualify, persons would need confirmation on the receiving end from a family member, a church, community organization etc.

4) The Homeless Community (example): This part of our community “chooses” to be homeless and have no desire to seek assistance other than just being out there in our community. This is where law enforcement would need to step in and assess each situation accordingly. To address Hygiene concerns of this area of community, we would need to create and construct **Hygiene Stations** throughout our communities that would offer restroom/shower and other simple amenities to keep our community safe and clean.

During this time with the challenge that COVID-19 has placed on us all, we will have to adjust as we continue to address this pandemic issue one step at a time.

6) Sustainability in the Visitor Industry Hawaii’s visitor industry has gone to great lengths to make its businesses “greener” and eco-friendlier. What government incentives would you propose or support to help our industry bolster these initiatives?

I support the **ALOHA PLUS CHALLENGE** which is supported by all Counties and identifies the following six areas of Sustainability and examples of projects that are connected to this program

1) Clean Energy – conversion of all streetlights to LED lighting

2) Local Food Production – Creation of agricultural parks throughout our communities

3) Green Jobs/Green Workforce – support our Future Farmer of America Program through a voucher program for youth.

4) Natural Resource Management – Identification of our Moku and Ahupua’a (land divisions) and the growing of our own food

5) Waste Management – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle initiatives.

6) Smart Growth/Sustainable Communities – support of Walkable /Bikeable communities

- 7) Visitor Industry Health, Safety & Security Standards As the COVID-19 pandemic began to spread throughout our state, it became clear that establishing health and hygiene standards would be critical to restoring trust in our industry. As such, we developed the HLTA Health, Safety & Security Standards. These were created after reviewing the latest information from the CDC, WHO, and EPA, as well as input from industry stakeholders. Our standards were submitted to the State Department of Health for its review. After receiving DOH approval, we shared our standards with the governor, HI-EMA, State Attorney General, and all the mayors. Please answer yes or no: Would you support the adoption of our standards as statewide policy for lodging properties? **YES!**
- 8) Public Safety To date, HLTA has held two highly successful Visitor Public Safety Conferences on Oahu. These conferences have brought together hotel management, security professionals, lawmakers, law enforcement, social service providers, and other stakeholders to discuss possible solutions to issues such as late-night cabarets and the need for more security cameras throughout Waikiki, the homeless population in Chinatown, and a spike in shoplifting around the island. Each conference led to significant progress in addressing these community issues. Neighbor Island Candidates Only: Would you support HLTA in convening a Visitor Public Safety Conference in your county in 2021? **YES!** If so, what specific public health and safety issues would you like to see discussed.

The Health and Safety of our residents and our visitors is always top priority and I look forward to finding solutions and implementation of these solutions in a timely manner. The main concern for all of us now is to address the COVID-19 pandemic and how the new normal way of how we manage ourselves and our communities will be. I look forward to being part of the solution and connecting the right resources at all levels to assure positive outcomes and solutions for all.

- 9) If elected, what do you hope to accomplish during your first year in office, which will undoubtedly be one of the most challenging and difficult times the state and counties have ever faced.
- I see myself as the bridge (Ka Uapo) and should I have the opportunity to serve as one of the seven council members on the Kauai County Council, I will bring to the table the ability to connect resources and people in finding solutions for the people that we serve. Again, COVID-19 will be top priority and UNITY by all involved will bring positive outcomes for all.**
- 10) Please share with us one fun fact about yourself. **I enjoy singing a song or two and I look forward to singing a tune with President and CEO Mufi Hannemann at the next HLTA conference (or a venue of his choice) as the opening ACT!!! IMUA....**

