

## The future of tourism in Hawai'i

1. 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 support ways to diversify within tourism. I am a strong supporter of agritourism, which is sustainable and can help boost our tourism industry. At the same time, I support diversifying our economy into green technology. A proposal that I am supporting would be for the State to invest into green tech research at the University of Hawaii and allow that research to be readily available to any business or entity on the condition that they operate out of Hawaii and hire a quota of the workforce.

2. 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 O'ahu's Hanauma Bay. Do you support user impact fees? Do you have other ideas that would embrace this model?

Yes, I support impact fees. Impact fees work very well and I look forward to replicating it at other prime tourist sites. One idea that I support is a modest green fee that can be collected at any point of entry into the state that would only be applied to visitors and not individuals holding a Hawaii ID or Hawaii student ID. It would be administered at the entry point so that the burden of collecting doesn't have to fall on our airline or lodging industry. I believe that this will help boost quality tourism at the same time generate revenue without regressive taxation on residents.

3. In FY2019, the State collected \$600.3 million in TAT revenue, of which \$79 million was allocated to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. The severe decline in TAT revenues means that future funding is in jeopardy for vital visitor industry marketing and support, public services provided by the counties, and other recipients of that money. With tourism-derived revenue expected to remain low or non-existent for many months to come—at a time when HTA marketing support for the industry will be most needed—would you be in favor of reallocating other State revenues to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and mandated recipients of TAT funding to enable the visitor industry to reopen and rebuild?

I would be open to the idea of reallocating State funds to revive our tourism industry as long as it doesn't come at the cost of cutting social programs or other services to our residents. The State faces a budget deficit, and our goal must be to look at ways we generate revenue. This includes impact fees, green fees, and the legalization of cannabis.

4. In recent years, HLTA has worked with the HTA and Legislature to administer and allocate \$1 million in State matching funds to address homelessness. Would you support a similar measure that would provide funds for this initiative? Moreover, how would you work with the visitor industry to address homelessness statewide?

Yes, I support measures to provide funds for this initiative. I hope to look for more private public partnerships with the State and private sector to work with nonprofits to help address the homeless crisis.

5. Hawai'i's visitor industry has gone to great lengths to make its businesses more "green" and eco-friendly. What government incentives would you propose or support to help our industry bolster these initiatives?

The environment is one of my top concerns. Alongside agritourism and green tech, I am hoping that we can gravitate towards green development and incentivising many of our hotels to upgrade their buildings to be more eco-friendly. I also support working with industry officials on a reforestation project and green beautification projects in the city.

6. 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? If not, please explain.

As of now, yes, I support the standards as I believe that it is thorough and well thought out. However, I hope that the standards can be modified if circumstances were to arise.

7. There appears to be ample public and legislative support for the replacement of aging Aloha Stadium, in which the State would use a public-private partnership to construct a new stadium and transit-oriented development to create opportunities for housing, commercial, and/or industrial growth. With the State government facing an austere financial future, do you support proceeding with the public-private partnership to replace

the stadium and develop the site, including authorizing a State investment in this project?  
If not, why?

I support starting the development as soon as it is feasible for us to do so. I believe that housing is a public health issue and that we start development there. As the office manager for Senator Stanley Chang and I have been strong proponents of public private partnership projects and redevelopment projects surrounding TOD sites.

8. State officials have been roundly criticized both for the efficacy of their efforts to quell the spread of COVID-19, as well as the way in which they have communicated with the public during this crisis. Do you agree with this criticism? If so, how would you have handled this public health emergency differently? If not, please explain.

My criticism of the state comes with the lack of transparency and miscommunication between the State and Counties. I would have been more transparent with how the State is moving forward in handling COVID-19. Public trust has been dwindling long before COVID-19 and transparency would help restore that lost trust.

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.

As we face a budget deficit, my first year in office will be to look for ways we can generate revenue for the state without regressive taxation on our businesses or residents. This includes raising penalties for DUI offenses, a green fee, to the legalization/regulation/taxation of recreational cannabis.

10. Please share with us one fun fact about yourself.

I love playing tennis. Being on the tennis court and doing the sport that I love makes me forget all the stress in my life.