



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

Aloha Mayor Kawakami,

We hope this letter finds you well.

Over the past week, we have enjoyed several productive discussions with key members of the Ige administration where we were briefed on and shared our concerns regarding the possible addition of a booster shot requirement to the Safe Travels program.

As you know, public discussion has continued to focus upon mandating that individuals be boosted to be considered “fully-vaccinated”. HLTA has been an outspoken proponent of vaccination from the earliest days of the pandemic, but we feel strongly that adding this requirement to Safe Travels will ultimately hurt our economic recovery and will diminish the growth we’ve seen in the tourism industry. As such, we have been meeting with members of Gov. Ige’s administration, and it has become clear that both Lt. Gov. Green and General Hara understand the plight that we are currently facing in that a fine balance must be continually struck between public health and the overall recovery of our local economy. We are writing to you to ask for your consideration in not supporting a booster mandate, but to consider urging Gov. Ige to Issue Guidance as we feel this represents the best path to achieving the Governor’s aim to balance public health with economic prosperity.

We also wanted to share with you what the industry will be doing to continue to protect the health of our guests, staffs, and the greater community.

First and foremost, we will continue our efforts to get our people vaccinated and boosted. Over the weekend, HLTA issued a survey to our membership requesting data on how many employees are vaccinated and boosted, as well as any existing programs that provide incentives for associates to get vaccinated. The initial results confirm that businesses across our industry realize the importance of vaccination and will continue to make it a priority. For example, 18 hotel properties on Maui have responded to the survey thus far, and the combined vaccination rate across of these is nearly 94% while more than half are actively offering incentives to encourage their people to get vaccinated and booster. We have sent this information to Lt. Gov. Josh Green and Major General Kenneth Hara and will continue to provide them with whatever data we receive.

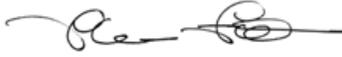
Additionally, the Omicron surge has made it clear that we must continue to be vigilant in how we keep people safe within Hawai‘i’s tourism industry. As you may recall, HLTA was the first industry to have its health and safety standards vetted and approved by the State Department of Health. These baseline protocols were key in re-opening the tourism industry prior to the availability of the COVID-19 vaccines and were highly effective in mitigating spread of the virus within the industry. We remain committed to implementing our standards and doing all that we can to keep our guests, staffs, and the greater community as safe as possible.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us at any time.

Mahalo for your consideration,



Mufi Hannemann
President & CEO
Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association



Thomas Foti
HLTA Chairperson
General Manager
Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa



Paul Toner
HLTA Chairperson-elect
General Manager
Royal Sonesta Kauai Resort