



HOTELPAC – 2020 Candidate Questionnaire (State)

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 support tourism as our #1 driver to get the economy restarted short term & long term and do agree with the idea to 'diversify within' as local spend is not sufficient to balance our budget
- Covid-19 did allow us a breather to reevaluate, collaborate with other industries and focus on quality over quantity including but not limited to agriculture, technology, energy sectors and increase export island products

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

- As a conservative Native Hawaiian, I do support user impact fees that will help preserve our islands' natural resources so this does not negatively impact local families through additional taxes
- Furthermore, we need to ensure any associated fees are applied to that specific entity and not the general fund
- Offer true cultural / sustainable experiences for a donation to the no-profit affiliated and also grant tax incentives for incorporating an educational component
- Establish an enforcement team to help regulate unpermitted or illegal tour operators
- Increase exposure to feature local vendors virtually before, during & after visiting the island through messaging with partner airlines

3) Funding for the Hawai'i Tourism Authority 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?



- The uses (or abuse) of the TAT is ONE of the main reasons I became incredibly engaged with local policy years ago
- I would be in favor of reallocating funds while holding HTA accountable for data / statistics of where the marketing dollars will be allocated ie: geographically or through traditional channels
- As a current hotel Director of Sales, there is certainly areas of improvement to enhance and innovate the way we market our beautiful Hawaiian Islands especially with digital platforms and broadening our target audience

4) Homelessness Solutions - 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?

- Absolutely and would go a step further to allow HLTA to select their service / partner of choice to where the funds are appropriated, so it makes mutual sense for both parties (for example Maui's need are not the same as Waikiki's)
- Reports clearly show this is not a 'one-size fits all approach' – funding would be distributed to the following in need including but not limited to:
 - Women & Families – should take 1st priority
 - 1 paycheck away – social services / counseling should easily accessible
 - Mental Illness & Drug Addiction – this should not burden HPD but the state needs an aggressive plan to tackle with specialist

5) Sustainability in the Visitor Industry - 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?

- Promoting infrastructure improvement with increased incentives – from solar to lighting to buying all local
- Allow more remote / virtual positions so less cars are on the road (especially on Oahu)
- Full participation in Food Excess programs similar to Aloha Harvest
- Marriott has a great Green program where the guest is given additional loyalty points when opting out of daily housekeeping services
- Requiring all new builds to be energy efficient

6) 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? If not, please explain. **HLTA Health, Safety, & Security Standards – Click to view**

- YES, agree and would whole heartedly support a certificate to display as Marriott also provides a guideline but ultimately reverts to local government mandates
- As only one of three Marriott Oahu hotels that remained open during the pandemic, our staff was through trained and adopted all the suggested standards referred to as 'Commitment to Cleanliness'. Several of our sister hotels refer to us as 'Trendsetters'
- Our property has a dedicated champion to say on top of all new regulations from corporate and local officials
 - Visible signage, pre-arrival letters, health screening form, one time use key, quarantine log, head to toe PPE on hand at all times, decreased occupancy thresholds in all areas, hourly logs of sanitation and very detailed SOP of cleaning a checked out guestroom

7) Aloha Stadium Development - 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?

- Most definitely – with experience working in Las Vegas for 5 years; this venue is long overdue and would generate the demand through entertainment, corporate conventions and national / international athletics. Additionally, it's becoming more of a liability and concerned safety issues if it prolongs.
- From a local standpoint, my son plays Varsity Football for Kamehameha and what confidence booster for our homegrown athletes to play in a state-of-the-art facility

8) COVID-19 Response - 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.

- Absolutely agree with the criticism and the lack of leadership ranging from testing, transparency with record keeping, shortage of contract tracers and shutting down the economy twice without solutions to save our small business that are the core & culture of our communities
- Regarding mandatory 14-day quarantines, the burden fell on the hotel and put our workers in jeopardy. The implantation was rushed and flawed.



- Similar to other island countries like Hong Kong or Singapore – arrivals should have gone through rigorous screening upon departing the plane!

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.

- My leadership style in 3 words –
 - TEAM: starts from the bottom up and not top down
 - COLLABORATION: ability to agree to disagree with civility
 - ADAPTABILITY: embrace change and deal with the unexpected with grace & class
- 30 / 60 / 90 day plan:
 - 30 days: meet with community leaders and Senior Senate leadership - what works and what can be improved. Create an ACTION PLAN
 - 60 days – Implement Action Plan and continue dialogue with community, fellow Senators and industry leaders
 - 90 days – introduce or sponsor legislation

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

- We recently added a puppy to our family – his name is Bronco (after my dad’s original SUV)! He’s 5.25 pounds, a Pomeranian, Chihuahua, Terrier mix and our daughter’s new BFF

