

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?

Yes, I definitely support the HLTA longstanding position. Diversification is needed to expand and be sustainable within our state. We lack agriculture production and cultural education. Tourism in Hawaii were started because of the natural beauty of the islands and the Hawaiian culture. We were known for our dance, singing, weaving, lei making, fishing, farming and more. If we expand our diversification and bring back history of agriculture and culture then tourism will rise again

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?

Yes I support the User Impact Fees. We need to be careful as to which popular visitor attractions should have user impact fees. The fees will be used to maintain feasible subsidies to maintain and enhance these attractions for future visitors.

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?

Assuming that HTA and other mandated recipients are in need of funding, then I would be in favor of reallocating other state revenues.

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?

Definitely I would support the HLTA/HTA/Legislator to provide funds for the initiative to address the issue of homelessness. Moreover, I will definitely work with HLTA, HTA and the visitor industry to address the homelessness concerns statewide. This proposal has come before the committee in which I have supported and I will continue to support it

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?

The legislature should explore the concept of designating tax incentives to tourism businesses that focus on promoting “green” and eco-friendly activities.

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, I commend the HLTA for developing the HLTA Health, Safety and Security Standards. These standards should be adopted as statewide policy.

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?

Although the State Government does face financial challenges due to the pandemic. I support going ahead with the private public partnership to replace the stadium and develop the site.

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.

As shown by the activities of the Senate Special committee on Covid-19 of which I am one of 6 members we have been concerned on improving the state response to Covid-19 by opening up the transparency and communication with the people to move forward together as one.

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.

If re-elected, drawing on the lessons on the special senate committee of covid-19 I will advocate on the state procedure so that we can avoid situations like the unemployment compensation,

school opening and contact tracing cases that occurred this year. We as a committee have learned valuable lessons throughout this experience especially on how to deal with another crisis like this occur.

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

Loves spending time with my daughter, I am a family man. One memory that I mostly enjoyed with my daughter was seeing the group Fifth Harmony perform in concert.