



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Written Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Tourism and
Senate Committee on Hawaiian Affairs
Thursday, Feb. 10, 2011, 1:15 pm, Conference Room 224
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SB 108 RELATING TO NATIVE HAWAIIAN CULTURE

The University supports this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in our BOR approved budget. SB 108 proposes to establish a comprehensive Hawaiian cultural resources inventory accessible to visitor industry providers, employees, visitors, cultural practitioners and residents. As such, it represents a logical extension for TIM School's previous partnerships with Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (NaHHA) on several worthwhile projects, including the development of the Ola Hawai'i curriculum and training of 21 Hawaiian cultural tourism experts funded by federal grants. Another joint TIM-NaHHA project on a Hawaiian cultural bridge training program for Korean and Chinese travel agents funded by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority was recently completed.

The TIM School has also incorporated Hawaiian cultural values into its curriculum. The original course on management by Hawaiian cultural values was taught by the late Dr. George Kanehele. The course has since been an integral part of TIM curriculum for the past decade in helping prepare TIM students to be sensitive and knowledgeable about host cultural values.

Dr. Kanehele called tourism "the keeper of the culture," but only if the authentic culture is nurtured in order to preserve a destination's "sense of place." Thus, this bill will help to ensure that the goal of cultural preservation is perpetuated by creating a much needed mechanism to steward our unique cultural resources for Hawai'i tourism. It would make it easier for marketers to promote cultural products, make quality cultural products more accessible to visitors, and promote authentic representations of Hawaiian culture by fostering pride and motivation among residents and youth.

Everyone in Hawai'i has benefitted from a half century of Hawai'i tourism, one of the best known tourism brands in the world because of its unique culture. But Hawai'i is now a mature tourism destination that is subject to many forces of cultural erosion. Our research has shown that Hawai'i residents value cultural tourism. Therefore, an investment in a cultural database will help perpetuate the essence of Hawai'i tourism into the future. Consolidating and disseminating usable information will go a long way to strengthening the knowledge base of Hawaiian cultural resources statewide.

Thus, the TIM School would be pleased to collaborate with the other named agencies and relevant parties, since it would also be a valuable resource for our own curriculum, training programs and projects for students, faculty and professionals.