

September 30, 2021

MEMO TO: CARE-27 File

F R O M: Kelly Takaya King, Chair *Kelly T. King*
Climate Action, Resilience, and Environment Committee

SUBJECT: **TRANSMITTAL OF LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL RELATING TO VISITOR IMPACTS TO COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL RESOURCES** (CARE-27)

The attached legislative proposal pertains to Item 27 on the Committee's agenda.

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Attachment

OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY CLERK

2021 SEP 30 PM 12:03

RECEIVED

Resolution

No. _____

URGING THE MAYOR TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HO'OMĀHUA INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, the United Nations World Tourism Organization defines sustainable tourism as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”; and

WHEREAS, the visitor industry is important to the County as a major economic driver; and

WHEREAS, according to the Maui County General Plan 2030, the Maui County tourism goal is “To strategically manage tourism on Maui, Molokaʻi, and Lānaʻi in a sustainable manner that promotes economic well-being, quality of life for residents, preservation of natural and cultural resources, and quality experiences for visitors”; and

WHEREAS, Maui Island visitor arrivals in 2019 increased by 5.4 percent to 3,071,596, a milestone that made it the fifth consecutive record-breaking year, according to the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority; and

WHEREAS, continued growth in the number of visitors to Maui Island is projected for the next few years, and according to the Maui County Tourism Industry Strategic Plan 2017-2026, includes plans to “increase structural capacity to accommodate more visitors”; and

WHEREAS, to ensure economic and environmental sustainability, tourism-based economies must “shift focus from promotion to broader planning and management challenges,” according to a May 2018 paper entitled “Rethinking Hawaii Tourism: Time to Shift from Marketing to Managing Tourism?” by Professor Emeritus James Mak of the University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa; and

WHEREAS, visitors should be provided information allowing them to engage in sustainable travel, including how to identify companies that follow sustainable practices, how to minimize waste, the importance of buying local, and reef-safe sunscreen; and

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WHEREAS, page 60 of the Countywide Policy Plan directs policy makers to “monitor the carrying capacity of the islands’ social, ecological, and infrastructure systems with respect to the economy”; and

WHEREAS, there are no real-time data resources available to objectively share how many people are visiting a point of interest (“hotspot”) or series of hotspots that can enable a resident or visitor to make an informed decision of traveling to such areas; and

WHEREAS, there is a lack of objective data to understand when and how many people visit hotspots that allows for decision makers to better understand and serve their community needs; and

WHEREAS, ‘Ohana ‘Ekolu LLC, a Native Hawaiian majority-owned business, has proposed the Ho‘omāhua Initiative in partnership with nonprofit organizations and community stakeholders to provide a holistic approach to tourism management called Smart Tourism™; and

WHEREAS, the Ho‘omāhua Initiative will, through its nonprofit stakeholders, actively fundraise and work to incubate and accelerate Native Hawaiian-owned businesses and Hawai‘i Domestic businesses to be incorporated into the Smart Tourism app to promote a circular economy in Hawai‘i; and

WHEREAS, the Ho‘omāhua Initiative will connect residents and visitors to volunteer opportunities with stakeholder nonprofit organizations and community partners to grow regenerative tourism opportunities; and

WHEREAS, Smart Tourism™ is a blending of web and mobile applications featuring software using artificial intelligence, Internet of Things devices, Global Positioning Systems, Geographic Information System Mapping use in software development, machine learning, and spatial and location recognition for the tourism industry; and

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WHEREAS, Smart Tourism™ is able to:

- enable intelligent decision-making for residents and visitors to manage their travel through real-time data being transmitted to an application;
- incentivize residents and visitors to make decisions that reduce the impact of congested hotspots when utilizing the application and receiving real-time alerts;
- highlight Kanaka Maoli-Native Hawaiian businesses and artisans to enable meaningful connections between tourists and the Kanaka Maoli community with the express purpose of inspiring youth to see the value in keeping their cultural traditions and practices alive;
- aid in a better management of resources to an area through a reservation system;
- increase public safety with an understanding of hotspot conditions;
- improve resident satisfaction with tourism by reducing tourism load to communities; and
- generate objective data to inform decision-makers about their communities; and

WHEREAS, although the 2018 Hawai'i Tourism Resident Sentiment Survey found the visitor industry is generally viewed favorably, residents seek more than economic benefits, such as "having a voice in tourism development, presenting Native Hawaiian culture authentically and preserving Native Hawaiian Culture"; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it supports the implementation of the Ho'omāhua Initiative;

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2. That it urges the Mayor to support the implementation of the Ho'omāhua Initiative; and
3. That certified copies of this Resolution be sent to Paulo Faleafine, Chief Executive Officer, 'Ohana 'Ekolu LLC; Martha Rogers, Chief Executive Officer, Bay Park Data Solutions; Kevin J. Kennedy, Chief Executive Officer, Quanergy; John De Fries, President and Chief Executive Officer, Hawai'i Tourism Authority; Sherry Duong, Executive Director, Maui Visitors Bureau; John Monahan, President & Chief Executive Officer, Hawai'i Visitors & Convention Bureau; the Honorable Michael P. Victorino, Mayor, County of Maui; Suzanne Case, Chairperson, Board of Land and Natural Resources, State of Hawai'i; and the Honorable David Y. Ige, Governor, State of Hawai'i.

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