



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

Testimony of

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

Committee on  
Ways and Means

House Bill 1847 HD2 SD1: Relating to the Sports and Entertainment Authority

Chair Tokuda, Vice Chair Dela Cruz, and members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of House Bill 1847 HD2 SD1, which calls for the establishment of a sports and entertainment authority.

Our state has succeeded in creating or attracting major sports events over the years, among them the Honolulu Marathon, National Football League Pro Bowl, Sony Open and other professional golf tournaments, and college athletics. These events have showcased the beauty of Hawai'i to national and global television audiences and brought teams and fans to our shores. We have also been the venue of some major concert and entertainment shows and productions through the years. Despite these successes we can do better as we have also missed out on opportunities to attract marquee sports events and have fallen short on executing and implementing these events successfully.

Unlike other states and municipalities, we have not had a strong statewide advocate for sports and entertainment; nor have we had a focused and coordinated approach as we have experienced with our film and TV industry. Some recent controversies over our ability to host major events offer evidence that more effective, coordinated leadership will be necessary for this sector of our economy to succeed. These shortcomings point to the need to establish a state sports and entertainment authority, more so since we have witnessed the loss of some of these events to other locales and venues.

Having been personally involved in both public and private sector negotiations to keep the NFL Pro Bowl in Hawaii, fund sports competitions, and attract film and television productions, I can attest to the importance of having an authoritative representative or body convey the innumerable benefits of coming to Hawaii, follow up with the organization or promoter, offer a first-hand introduction to our excellent facilities, and assist with requirements before, during, and after an event. Teams, entertainers, and fans should want to return to the islands because of our involvement and their positive experiences. Certainly, the renovation of the Aloha Stadium could be a high priority of the proposed authority. A sports and entertainment authority, with sufficient funding and creative leadership, would not only provide this much-needed expertise, but provide the catalyst for the development and future growth of this industry.

Mahalo.