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Testimony of
Lloyd Unebasami
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on
H.B. 1472
Relating to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

House Committee on Tourism, Culture & International Affairs
Monday, February 2, 2009
8:30 a.m.
Conference Room 312

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) strongly supports 1472, which proposes three housekeeping amendments to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority law.

President and Chief Executive Officer References

The current law refers to the chief executive of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) as the "executive director". The HTA was advised a number of years ago that the title of "President and Chief Executive Officer" should be used instead, particularly in dealings with Asian and foreign businesses and executives, where the title of "President and Chief Executive Officer" is more respected than Executive Director. The proposed bill changes the statutory references to chief executive of the HTA from "executive director" to "president and chief executive officer". Further, because the HTA Board is a policy-making board rather than an administrative board, the policies for the administration of the Authority should be carried out by the president and chief executive officer and the staff of the authority. The proposed bill amends section 201B-3 to provide that contracts and engaging of the services of consultants and contractors are to be executed by the president and chief executive officer.

Consolidation of Authority for Appointment of Officers and Employees

Section 201B-2, titled "Hawaii tourism authority; establishment; board; staff" includes in subsection (f), two paragraphs relating to the hiring of a sports coordinator and the employment of persons not subject to chapters 76 and 78 to perform and execute the functions of the authority. Section 201B-3, which describes the powers and duties of the HTA includes in paragraph (7) the authority for "*...the appointment of officers, agents, and employees, ...prescribing their duties and responsibilities, and fixing their salaries, without regard to chapters 76 and 78, if there is no anticipated revenue shortfall ...and funds have been appropriated by the legislature*". The bill provides for the consolidation of the employment provisions of the HTA law in paragraph (7) of section 201B-3.

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Reporting of Contracts and Agreements

Section 201B-7 requires the HTA to provide notice to the Speaker of the House of Representative and the President of the Senate of any contract or agreement valued at \$25,000 and over on the same day that notice is given to the Governor. The bill proposes to amend the law to provide that the HTA shall periodically submit a report of the contracts and agreements entered into by the Authority. The HTA currently submits, through its Executive Director's report to the Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the President of the Senate, notice of *all* contracts and agreements entered into by the HTA. The bill proposes an amendment to conform to this practice.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.