



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
HONOLULU

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

March 31, 2009

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The economic challenge facing our nation has imposed a significant impact on domestic and international travel. Hawai'i's economy is largely dependent on tourism and the drop in activity has resulted in dramatic declines in our economy with a corresponding impact on businesses, including closures and job losses.

The State and our visitor industry have collaborated to cooperatively undertake many marketing programs aimed at stimulating travel to the islands. Through this effort, we have been successful in reducing the decline in visitor arrivals by offering lower-priced and value-added packages for travelers. Despite the emphasis on and effort at market outreach and value-laden promotional offers, we ended 2008 with a decline of 10.8% in arrivals, which resulted in a loss of \$1.2 billion in visitor expenditures.

Visitors who come to the islands for conventions, meetings and incentive rewards (CMI) are a very important part of our visitor mix. In 2008, these visitors totaled 442,000, representing about 7% of our total visitor arrivals. There has been great concern, therefore, about the adverse effects caused by the well-intentioned efforts to address the problem of corporate excess and business travel for the companies who have received emergency funding from the government. It has caused a further downturn in CMI travel, especially for Hawai'i, where we have struggled to position our islands as a place to do business, as well as a leisure vacation destination.

This current atmosphere that brands legitimate CMI travel as excess has resulted in 132 group cancellations of meetings and incentive trips to Hawai'i so far this year and next, representing a loss of 87,003 room nights. The total loss in direct revenue has been \$58.8 million, amounting to an economic impact of \$97.6 million in total lost output and

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694 full- and part-time jobs from all of the visitor industry. Hawai'i's businesses and residents cannot afford to suffer such continued losses that can and should be avoided.

While we understand the need for balance, accountability and transparency in programs supported by government funding, tourism is an industry that employs many workers who have lost—and will continue to—lose their jobs as travel declines.

CMI travel is a cost-saving and effective tool that companies use to strengthen business relationships, align and educate employees and customers, and compensate employees for business performance.

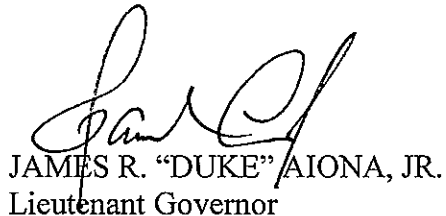
In this period of economic downturn when our government and businesses are striving to restore economic stability, the last thing we should do is implement policies or encourage behavior that jeopardizes any industry, especially one that has such a far-reaching impact on communities all across America.

We appreciate your recent comments encouraging travel and urge you to oppose any measure that would unfairly restrict the ability for companies to use CMI travel as a legitimate business tool.

Sincerely,



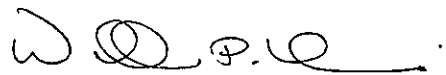
LINDA LINGLE
Governor



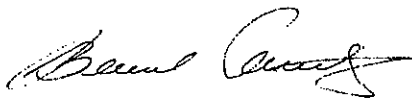
JAMES R. "DUKE" AIONA, JR.
Lieutenant Governor



MUFI HANNEMANN
Mayor
City & County of Honolulu



WILLIAM P. KENOI
Mayor
County of Hawai'i



BERNARD P. CARVALHO, JR.
Mayor
County of Kaua'i



CHARMAINE TAVARES
Mayor
County of Maui



Lloyd Unebasami
Interim President & CEO
Hawaii Tourism Authority



John Monahan
President & CEO
Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau



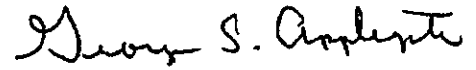
Joe Davis
General Manager
Hawaii Convention Center/SMG



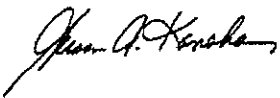
Murray Towill
President
Hawaii Hotel & Lodging Association



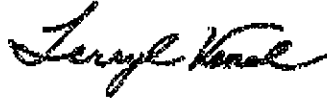
Carol Reimann
Executive Director
Maui Hotel & Lodging Association



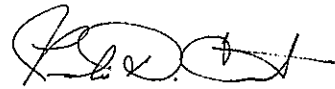
George Applegate
Executive Director
Big Island Visitors Bureau



Susan Kanoho
Executive Director
Kauai Visitors Bureau



Terryl Vencel
Executive Director
Maui Visitors Bureau



Les Enderton
Executive Director
Oahu Visitors Bureau



Jim Tollefson
President & CEO
Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii




Randall Francisco
President
Kauai Chamber of Commerce



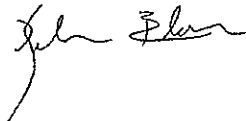
Vivian Landrum
Executive Director
Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce



Pamela Tumpap
President
Maui Chamber of Commerce



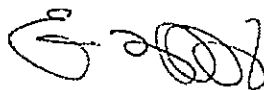
Thos Rohr
President
Kohala Coast Resort Association




Kelvin Bloom
President – Aston Hotels & Resorts, LLC
Chair – Hawaii Tourism Authority



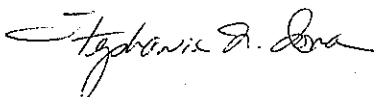
Jerry Jamesson
General Manager – Aston Shores at
Waikoloa
Chair – Big Island Visitors Bureau



Eric Napoleon
General Manager
Aston at Poipu Kai



Clem Lagundimao III
General Manager
Aston at the Executive Centre Hotel



Stephanie Nalani Iona
General Manager
Aston at Waimea Plantation Cottages



Sandi Kato-Klutke
General Manager
Aston Islander on the Beach



Mark D. Mrantz, CHA
General Manager
Aston Ka'anapali Shores



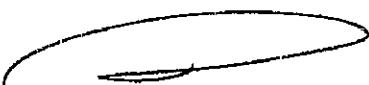
Ray Blouin
General Manager
Aston Kauai Beach at Makaiwa & Aston
Aloha Beach Hotel




David Hadrick
General Manager
Aston Kona by the Sea



Clinton Owen
General Manager
Aston Mahana at Ka'anapali



Dennis Costa
General Manager
Aston Maui Hill



Michael A. Winchatz
General Manager
Aston Pacific Monarch



Brian M. Cox
General Manager
Aston Paki Maui Resort



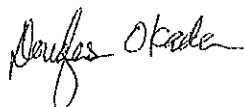
Mark DeMello
General Manager
Aston Waikiki Beach Hotel



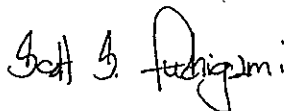
Michael A. Tasaka
General Manager
Aston Waikiki Beach Tower



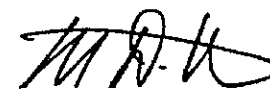
Earl T. Nakachi
General Manager
Aston Waikiki Joy Hotel



Douglas Okada, C.H.A.
General Manager
Aston Waikiki Sunset



Scott S. Fuchigami
General Manager
Aston Waikoloa Colony Villas



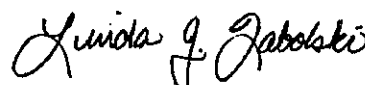
Brian DiMartino
President
21st Century Group



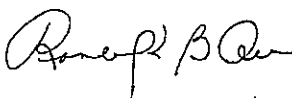
Michael Paulin
Chairman
Aqua Hotels & Resorts



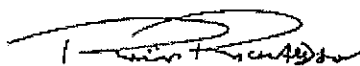
Linda Chock, CTC
Director of Sales & Asian Pacific Marketing
Bishop Museum



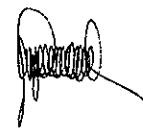
Linda Zabolski
Owner/CEO
Captain Zodiac



Randolph B. Ahlo
General Manager
Castle Resort & Hotels - Waikiki Shore



Philip Richardson
President
Current Affairs - A Special Event
Production Company



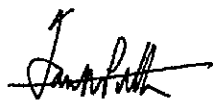
Maynard Torchiana
Executive Vice President/General Manager
Destination Resorts Hawaii, Inc.



Kyoko Kimura
Managing Director
Diamond Wailea Resort & Spa



Christof Luedi
Regional Vice President
Fairmont Hotels & Resorts Hawaii



Ian Pullan
General Manager
The Fairmont Orchid, Hawaii



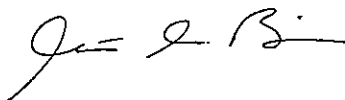
Thomas Steinhauer
Regional Vice President
Four Seasons Resorts Hawaii



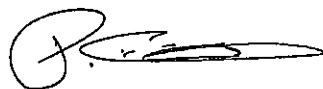
Edward Linsley
Resort Manager
Four Seasons Resort Lana'i at Manele Bay



Robert Nolan
Resort Manager
Four Seasons Resort Lana'i, The Lodge at
Koele



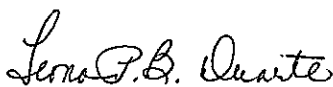
Matt Bailey
Managing Director
Grand Wailea Resort Hotel & Spa



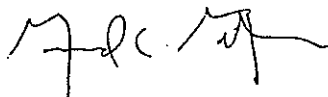
Peter Shaindlin
Chief Operating Officer
Halekulani Corporation



Laura Richards
General Manager
Hanalei Colony Resort



Leona P.B. Duarte
District Sales Manager - Maui
Hawaiian Airlines



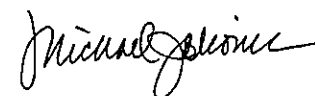
Jerry Gibson
Area Vice President
Hilton Hawaii



Robert Minicola
Regional Vice President of Operations
HTH Corporation



Doug Sears
General Manager
Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort and Spa



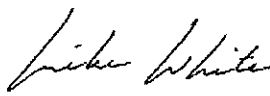
Michael Jokovich
General Manager
Hyatt Regency Maui Resort and Spa



David Lewin
General Manager
Hyatt Regency Waikiki Beach Resort & Spa



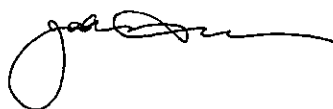
Philip Sammer
General Manager
Ilima Hotel



Mike White
General Manager
Ka'anapali Beach Hotel



Paul Horner
General Manager
Keauhou Beach Resort



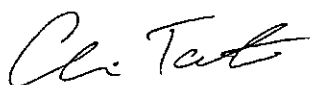
Jak Hu
General Manager
King Kamehameha's Kona Beach Hotel



Edward K. Hubennette
Vice President - North Asia, Hawaii &
South Pacific
Marriott International, Inc.



Dan Banchiu
General Manager
JW Marriott Ihilani Resort & Spa



Chris Tatum
General Manager
Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort & Spa



Rodney Ito
General Manager
Waikoloa Beach Marriott Resort & Spa



Bill Countryman
General Manager
Wailea Beach Marriott Resort & Spa



Elliot Mills
General Manager
Kauai Marriott Resort & Beach Club



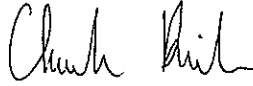
Edgar Gum
General Manager
Marriott's Ko Olina Beach Club



John Jaskula
General Manager
Marriott's Maui Ocean Club



Steve Yannarell
General Manager
Marriott's Waiohai Beach Club



Chris Resich
President & CEO
MC&A, Inc.



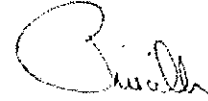
Kay Hampton
President
Media Matters



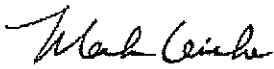
Velma Hulihe'e-Carstensen
Sales & Marketing Manager
Morton's The Steakhouse - Honolulu



W. David P. Carey III
President and CEO
Outrigger Enterprises Group



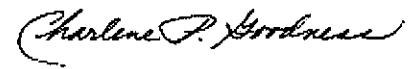
Priscilla Texeira
President
Pacific Marketing Corporation



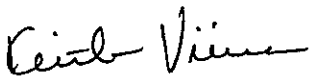
Mark Vinsko
General Manager
Plantation Hale



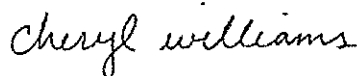
Donn J. Takahashi
President
Prince Resorts Hawaii



Charlene "Charlie" Goodness
Hotel Manager
Maui Prince Hotel, Makena Resort & Golf
Courses



Keith Vieira
Senior Vice President and Director of
Operations, Hawaii & French Polynesia
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide



Cheryl Williams
Regional Vice President, Sales &
Marketing, Hawaii & French Polynesia
Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide



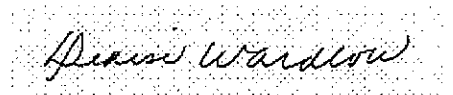
Angela Vento
General Manager
Sheraton Kauai Resort



Milton Sgarbi
General Manager
The St. Regis Princeville Resort



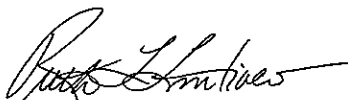
Craig Anderson
General Manager
Westin Maui Resort & Spa



Denise Wardlow
General Manager
Westin Princeville Ocean Resort Villas



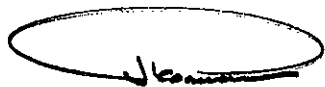
Gerald "Chip" Bahouth
General Manager
Sheraton Maui Resort and Spa



Ruth Limtiaco
Chief Executive Officer
The Limtiaco Company



Teddi Anderson
President
The Limtiaco Company



Jean Pierre Cercillieux
EVP & General Manager
The New Otani Kaimana Beach Hotel



Thomas W. Donovan
General Manager
The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua



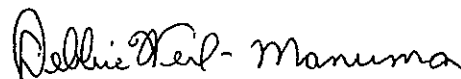
Douglas Chang
General Manager
The Ritz-Carlton Club and Residences,
Kapalua Bay



Douglas Rucker
General Manager
The Whaler on Ka'anapali Beach



Charlene Thompson
Executive Vice President
Tihati Productions, Ltd.



Debbie Weil-Manuma
President
Weil and Associates, Inc.

c: The Honorable Daniel K. Akaka
United States Senate

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
United States Senate

The Honorable Neil Abercrombie
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Mazie Hirono
United States House of Representatives