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ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
HAWAIʻI TOURISM AUTHORITY
Thursday, February 26, 2026, 9:30 a.m.

Virtual Meeting

MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Kimberly Agas (Co-Vice Chair), James McCully (Co-Vice Chair), Leah Belmonte, Mericia Palma Elmore, Terry Fischer, Joel Guy, Troy Lazaro, Danny Ojiri, Lisa Paulson, Chris West, Linda Wong
MEMBER NOT PRESENT:	Lānaʻi Tabura
HTA STAFF PRESENT:	Caroline Anderson, David Uchiyama, Talon Kishi, Jadie Goo, Milton Lafitaga, Kendrick Leong, Jill Radke, Carole Hagihara, Lindsay Sanborn
GUESTS:	Dir. James Tokioka, Jennifer Chun, Martha Garcia
LEGAL COUNSEL:	John Cole

1. Call to Order

Co-Vice Chair Agas called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

2. Roll Call to Announce Name of Participating Board Members and to Identify Who Else is Present with Board Member if Location is Nonpublic

Mr. Uchiyama conducted the roll call, and members were in except for member Tabura, who was excused.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes of the January 29, 2026 Advisory Board Meeting

Co-Vice Chair McCully moved the motion to adopt the minutes, and Member Elmore seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

Co-Vice Chair Agas asked Member Lazaro do a cultural opening protocol. He shared the ʻŌlelo Noʻeau today called He Aliʻi Ka ʻĀina He Kauwā ke Kanaka, which means the land is Chief; man is its servant.

4. Report of Permitted Interactions at Informational Meetings or Presentations Not Organized by the Board Under HRS section 92-2.5(e)

There was no input on Permitted Interaction Groups.

5. CEO Report

Dir. Tokioka thanked everyone for their hard work. He confirmed they had started with the goal of working with the legislature and regaining their trust. He confirmed that the legislature has introduced a bill that may restore some of the exemptions for events. He took this opportunity to thank them, specifically the Senate, where Senator DeCoite introduced a short-form bill regarding event procurement. He also thanked the sports and film committees for their commitment. He gave the film committee credit for all the productions currently in town.

Member Elmore was grateful to be working there.

The Director passed on greetings and gratitude from John Wells. He confirmed that 120 members were currently working on the three projects and that Gov. Green was very appreciative and supportive of both the film committee, the sports committee, and the administration teams.

There were no questions from the Board members.

Ms. Anderson thanked their hardworking staff for all they do to carry out their initiatives. She confirmed that the CEO report reflects all the work our staff has done.

She confirmed that they continue to engage with the legislature and have been down there testifying. She thanked Jill Radke and Carol Hagihara and confirmed that Ms. Radke would provide an update on where all the bills are.

She confirmed that the HCC rooftop terrace deck repair project is on track, and that Martha Garcia, senior project manager with Rider Levett Bucknall (RLB), would provide a brief presentation on their progress.

For emergency preparedness, she confirmed that Mr. Uchiyama has been doing an excellent job working with HiEMA and that we have the right things in place when a crisis occurs.

Community Programmes - Ms. Anderson thanked Dede Howa and Lindsey Sandborn for all that they do, and Kilohana. She confirmed that from January through February, they had subtitled 31 cultural, sporting, and community events statewide, including festivals, hula shows, and conservation work days

For the destination app, she recognized Meagan DeGaia for her work in this, and Dir. Tokioka, the HVCB, and Jennifer Chun. She confirmed that the DBEDT survey is now available in the GoHawaii app so visitors to Hawaiʻi can fill it out. She advised that the information from this survey is really important for decision-making.

For workforce development, she recognized Dede Howa for her work. She confirmed that this is a partnership with the TIM School that offers five full fourth-year, full-time, full-term scholarships to public school seniors who want to work in Hawaii's visitor industry. The deadline to submit applications is March 1.

Global marketing team - she thanked Jadie Goo, acting Chief Brand Officer, and her team, Christina Tuchman and Jennifer Bastiaanse, for what they are doing with their global team. She highlighted their efforts with Hawaiʻi Tourism Canada during the Winter Olympics, which aired on TV, and the Hawaiʻi State Review campaign. She thanked the HVCB for developing the assets and the campaign. She noted the synergy with how Hawaiʻi Tourism Canada has taken those assets and carried them forward in the Canadian market.

Destination Management Action plans - she thanked planner Kendrick Leong and destination managers Patricia Ornellas, Meagan DeGaia, Kui Adolpho, Blane Andrade, Matthew Sueda, and the Ward Research team. She confirmed that the draft plans have been presented to the community and that the public is invited to provide feedback on the website. She advised that webinars were also held over the last two weeks on this topic.

Strategic plan - she thanked the Strategic Plan group for their guidance and the HTA staff for their contributions.

Mr. Lafitaga gave an update on Sports at the HTA. Mr. Lafitaga shared slides showing the events they participated in on Hawaiʻi Island, in partnership with the Seattle Seahawks. He advised that the development team arrived a week before the Super Bowl game and hold two well-supported camps for the girls at Waiakea High School. He confirmed that many were participating for the first time and were aged 13–18 (from ninth grade to seniors). Around 200 participants were involved, with many volunteer coaches and three athletic directors. They participated and helped coach and man some of the stations. Many of the participants had also been involved in flag football with their local high schools, and they were able to receive some professional training with the NFL teams that came in.

He advised that the synergy manager helped bring this to fruition. He confirmed that he also worked with Craig Tom, the Seattle Seahawks development manager, to bring this to the neighbor islands, and that they did so at no cost to the HTA.

Mr. Lafitaga confirmed that he and Matthew Sueda drove to the Kona at The Kealakehe High School. About 60 girls came out on a hot Sunday to learn skills and drills to help elevate their game. He was pleased that one of the top 50 legends who had played six seasons with the Seattle Seahawks during 2009 and 2014, Max Unger (offensive line center) helped out and showed the girls some of the skills he had learned.

Mr. Lafitaga advised that many were grateful for the opportunity to participate in their hometown, which saved them extra travelling costs.

He gave an update on the Sony Open numbers. He thanked the chairs of Sony. The total number of visitors from out of state was 16,162. The average length of stay was about 2 weeks or 10 days. Japan visitors spent 6 nights or 6 days, while Canada visitors spent 12 days. The total expenditure with the U.S. mainland is $194, Japan is $246, and Canada is at $166. The total expenditure, or economic impact, of the Sony Open was $53,737,196.

He felt that the HTA should continue to encourage Sony and the PGA to have this event here in Hawaiʻi.

He ended his presentation and invited any questions.

Member Fischer asked what the budget and outlay were for Sony. Mr. Lafitaga confirmed it was $655,000.

Co-Vice Chair McCully asked about what the dollar spent equated to. Mr. Lafitaga replied that his figures were the total numbers spent for visitors and locals.

Member Ojiri asked if there is an update on the future of the Sony Open. Mr. Lafitaga replied that they are still in discussion with the PGA team and are still looking at their scheduling. It depends on the PGA Tour when they release the schedule. He said they are looking to scale down their schedule and most. Because the players are looking to reduce some of the signature events. So as far as Sony, they are still negotiating with the PGA Tour after next year. There was nothing signed, but he confirmed that Sony will indeed be involved in 2027.

Dir. Tokioka confirmed that the schedule would be very different in 2028, as host and chair Tiger Woods announced at Riviera Country Club. He said there will be changes, and Brian Rolapp, the new president and CEO of the PGA Tour, informed the governor that they would downsize from 44 tournaments to fewer than 30, focusing on signature events like Pebble Beach, Riviera, and the Phoenix Open. He advised that although Sony Open was viewed as one of the smaller tournaments, they are still very comfortable continuing with it. He reported that the governor had reached out to some decision-makers, including people close to Tiger Woods, to let them know that Hawaiʻi is very interested in continuing the relationship, though it does not want to compete with the NFL or the playoffs. He clarified that the schedules will change. He advised that the TY company from Japan, which hosted the Sentry, wants to continue due to the value it adds to Maui and West Maui through job creation and economic spending. He applauded both Mr. Tadashi Yanai and Sentry, who donated $800,000 and $1 million, respectively, to the charity, even though the tournament was not played this year.

He confirmed that they would stay connected so that when things happen, they will be in the know and their voices would hopefully still be heard.

Ms. Anderson asked the members to save the date of March 13 for Tourism Day at the Capitol. She confirmed that the staff has been working with Hawaiʻi Hotel Alliance and The McClellan Group to organize this. She also confirmed that the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority's Spring Tourism Update will be held on April 1.

Dir. Tokioka advised that the Tourism Day would be highlighted by music by Kapono and Olomana, and hula shows by Tihati. He confirmed that a new group would be running it and that it would get many hotels and restaurants to participate.

Mr. Uchiyama said he has worked with many accountants and wanted to recognize Mr. Kishi for earning the right to be the VP of Finance for the HTA. Co-Vice Chair McCully seconded this.

Co-Vice Chair McCully said that earlier, they had requested that Ms. Chun be available to provide a DBEDT download at their meetings. He said Ms. Anderson should, from time to time, receive reports from Kilohana and the HVCB so that, as an Advisor Board, they are more aware of what the contractors are doing, as they make up a large part of our budget. Ms. Anderson said this would be actioned accordingly.

Dir. Tokioka said Ms. Anderson was a big part of resolving back payments, and that the amount the HVCB was owed was astronomical. He is very appreciative of the HTA and the team for ensuring everything is in compliance. He thanked the entire faculty house team.

Ms. Anderson pointed out the dashboards towards the end of the CEO report. She thanked Mr. Leong, the planner, for working with the brand team. She advised that this shows where each global marketing team is tracking against the measures identified in their contracts. The dashboard also shows the 2025 annual results and highlights how they have met or exceeded their targets, which will be reported on each quarter, along with the community programmes. The calendar will show the Board when these types of reports will be provided, as recommended by the auditors, and will communicate the results clearly.

Mr. Leong confirmed there were no public testimonies or questions online for review.

6. Update on the Hawaiʻi Convention Center Rooftop Construction

Ms. Anderson introduced Martha Garcia, senior project manager for RLB. She confirmed that they were appointed about two years ago as project managers for the rooftop repairs and other repairs at the HCC. Ms. Anderson advised that an architect/engineer was also hired, and in December, they contracted with the construction company for the repairs. She thanked the team and Ms. Orton and her team for their involvement.

Ms. Garcia provided an update and showed some images of their progress. The project was broken down into four phases:

Phase 1 (January – July, 2026)

- Mobilization, fencing, survey existing conditions (Swinerton Builders Fencing)
- Interior and rooftop demolition
- Structural upgrades
- Canopy piers

Phase 2 (July 2026 – February 2027)

- Canopy and MEP (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing) installation
- Deck repairs and MEP

Phase 3 (February 2027 – June 2027)

- Re-roofing

Phase 4 (June – November 20 27)

- Finishes

Ms. Garcia confirmed that there has been significant activity by Swinerton since they moved onto the site in January. They set up their offices and began securing the site in preparation for demolition and surveying the condition of the existing building. She showed images of the barricades the contractor had erected to prevent people from walking through. During January, the contractor started removing the rooftop finishes and the topping slab on level 4. They are taking care of the old landscaping planters and the plants, removing the soil, and taking care of the space that used to have the water feature.

On level 3, Ms. Garcia confirmed that they assessed the condition of the existing finishes and took the necessary steps to protect the existing walls and carpets. They pulled down the acoustic panels to protect them from damage. They also removed the existing fireproofing from the main structure to check the condition and the structure of the building. At the back of house, where the kitchen is, she confirmed that they pulled down the ceiling to check for any damage or rust on the deck before undertaking the extensive repairs. In February, they started in the level 3 meeting rooms to assess and then undertake the necessary protection.

Inclement Weather and Water Mitigation: Ms. Garcia advised that each project has its own challenges. The next images showed how Swinerton put measures in place to protect as much as possible and to ensure any leaks were contained and the building was protected. She confirmed they have a team for flood alerts issued. They come to the site as needed, 24/7, to ensure the building remains dry. She confirmed that the project is on schedule and on budget, but they are facing some challenges with the building permit. Ms. Garcia advised that they were consulting with the HTA and had provided all the necessary information to enable the HTA to finalize their review and, hopefully, have the permits released. She showed some images of how the team had kept the roof dry. She confirmed that the HCC has also installed a live camera, which can be viewed at any time as they progress, and advised that this was posted on the Hawaiʻi Convention website.

She advised that there is still a lot of demolition to be done and undertook to keep everyone updated on progress. She invited questions from the meeting.

Co-Vice Chair Agas commended the team for their good management during the recent rains and asked whether they encountered anything during the demolition that they hadn't anticipated.

Ms. Garcia advised that what they had already uncovered was very close to what the design team had communicated through the drawings during the RFP process. She said they are in a good place right now.

Co-Vice Chair Agas asked if they have the right support to help with the DPP or the permits. Ms. Garcia confirmed that they do, and that Bryan Gallagher is in active communication with the design team, and that every time they request a document, they return it promptly. However, they would like to accelerate this process as much as possible. She highlighted that one of the critical items is the procurement of the canopy, and they are awaiting written confirmation from the DPP that they can proceed.

Co-Vice Chair Agas asked Ms. Garcia to keep Teri Orton and the team updated regularly and to communicate with them if they felt they were going to hit a snag on a timeline or need any help. Ms. Garcia confirmed that they would. She said they are in constant communication with Ms. Orton and the whole team.

Co-Vice Chair McCully asked whether it was normal for public repair projects to go over budget. He noted when reviewing something at the stadium not long ago that the Data point says 9 out of 10 public projects for repair and rebuild go over budget. He asked her to confirm that theirs was a standard public procurement process, not a design-build. Ms. Garcia confirmed yes. She confirmed that the design was completed last year and that they submitted it to DPP, explaining that this is a typical process in Hawaiʻi and that the permit process always takes longer than usual. Co-Vice Chair said this year it is taking longer to the get the permitting approval. He asked Ms. Garcia to confirm how far the permit approval was from being finalized. Ms. Anderson said they are working closely with the City and County DPP, and Dir. Tokioka is in communication with the Mayor and Dir. Apuna in this regard. They are just waiting for approval. Co-Vice Chair McCully asked whether they have an exemption to begin the work without a permit.

Ms. Garcia confirmed that they have permission to proceed with the work before the release of the permit, that the last thing they were waiting for from them was the fireproof floodproofing report, which was submitted a week ago. She was hoping to receive the permit within the next two to three weeks.

Co-Vice Chair Agas confirmed there was no public testimony or questions online.

7. Presentation and Discussion of Current Market Insights and Conditions

Ms. Chun confirmed they are already ahead of 2025 for visitor expenditures and visitor arrivals. She highlighted that many people had come from the U.S., with an increase in visitor arrivals from the U.S. West and U.S. East. She confirmed double-digit increases in arrivals with significant increases in expenditures.

She noted that, due to the HTA campaign, they were seeing significant increases in Maui and in the number of hotel-only visitors in the U.S. West and U.S. East, with ties to the January figures. Hotel performance statewide is only a 1.9% overall occupancy increase, with average daily rates basically flat and RevPAR slightly up. On the vacation rental side, there were decreases in January for occupancy and ADR.

She showed two charts reflecting the size and the volume of hotel and vacation rental demand. Vacation rental demand is just a fraction of hotel demand, yet it sometimes gets a lot more attention. She showed a slide with the TAT collections, which shows great results as expected. She confirmed that it was the average for the last few years, starting with January 2021. She commented that this was the highest collection they have had in a long time, similar to January 2023, when all the revenge travel drove it. Looking at the airports for January, she noted that Hawaii's airports were very busy but very similar to what was seen before, with not a big increase in the number of people coming through. She noted that Kahului had more people, which aligns with the increase in visitor arrivals to Maui, but there was a slight decrease in Kona and a small increase in Lihue.

Looking at load factors for January 2026 versus January 2025, she noted a slight decrease in domestic and international load factors. She hoped that in the coming months there would be fuller flights. She drew attention to the number of scheduled non-stop seats and noted that, overall, for the state, there was an increase in seats for January 2026 versus 2025, although not across the board. She noted that although there were higher increases, for example, in Kona than in Honolulu, there are more flights to Honolulu anyway.

She advised that February and March also showed an increase in non-stop seats for domestic and international down. She noted a decrease in domestic seats for March for Honolulu and also for April, the return of one flight to service Hilo direct from the mainland - The Las Vegas flight from Southwest.

Ms. Chun drew attention to a decrease in domestic seats for March and April affecting Honolulu, noting that the only flight returning to Hilo direct from the mainland is a special service tied to the Merrie Monarch event. This service is not part of the regular schedule and is not slated to begin until later in the year. On the broader market trends and insights side, there were numerous slides, but Ms. Chun indicated they would skip almost all of them to focus on key points. Specifically, attention was given to the relationship between the Japanese yen and U.S. visitor arrivals to Hawaiʻi; the Board's question last month was whether a stronger yen correlates with increased visitation. The presented data suggest that there isn't a clear trend of more visitors as the yen strengthens, while the Canadian dollar appears to follow a more pronounced trend in line with exchange rate movements. The takeaway is that, for the Japanese market, visitation is influenced by multiple factors beyond exchange rates, suggesting a more complex mix of drivers.

Additionally, the discussion included a recent STR hotel forecast for 2026, noting stable occupancy, minimal ADR change, and flat RevPAR, with slightly higher growth projected for 2027. The analysis emphasized looking at each island separately. For Oʻahu, Mr. Eslinger from HVCB and the STR forecast team discussed expectations that the market would remain essentially flat in 2026, with a marginal uptick in ADR and RevPAR, followed by a somewhat stronger uptick in ADR and RevPAR in 2027. Maui County was forecast to see an increase in occupancy, accompanied by a decrease in ADR and a slight decline in RevPAR, with all metrics anticipated to rebound in 2027. Hawaiʻi Island appeared largely flat in occupancy with ADR and RevPAR both expected to rise, continuing the positive trend into 2027. Kauai was forecast to show a decline in occupancy but increases in ADR and RevPAR, with all metrics expected to rise in 2027.

A critical caveat underscored in the briefing was that the STR forecast had been prepared a few weeks earlier, before certain developments that could affect the market were known. Specifically, events such as ongoing instability in Mexico were not factored into the forecast, despite the potential to influence traveler behavior—where groups might consider moving to Hawaiʻi due to safety concerns, and leisure travelers might adjust their plans with longer-range considerations in mind. The speaker acknowledged these unaccounted-for factors as opportunities that could influence Hawaii's market opportunities going forward.

Ms. Chun commented that 2026 may be a better year than previously anticipated. She noted that work is underway on the DBEDT tourism forecast and that optimism is high in certain markets, while others remain less optimistic. Building on the discussion from the last Board meeting about traveler profiles, she presented an example of what the traveler profile looks like. The example is available on the HTA website under "other research," specifically within the U.S. Traveler profile. The HTA subscribes to data similar to that seen for responsible travelers, collected from multiple markets: the United States, Japan, Canada, Australia, and Korea. These populations are surveyed daily, with new data available weekly; data are compiled for the U.S. on a monthly basis, for Canada on a quarterly basis, and for the other markets on a half-yearly basis.

A key point for this report is the definitions used in the full report on the HTA website. For the U.S., the average traveler is defined as having a household income of around $100,000, aged 25 to 54, planning an international vacation likely to book soon, who has visited Hawaiʻi or Alaska, with the next leisure destination being Hawaiʻi or Alaska. Alaska is included because it is a distant market relative to the mainland, suggesting that travelers willing to go to Alaska may have travel patterns similar to those considering Hawaiʻi, i.e., long-distance travelers. The national representation (Nat rep) is also provided. When examining residents by segment who match the 100k traveler profile, the top origins are California, New York, and Texas, with California standing out as the number one market. This aligns with expectations, as California residents are heavily represented among frequent travelers.

The report also highlights the importance of travel factors, broken down by segment. Attributes such as comfort and accessibility, value for money, entertainment and nightlife, consideration of sustainable principles, natural attractions and activities, cultural attractions, opportunities to experience local restaurants and businesses, and family-friendly options are assessed for their relative importance across markets. Across the U.S., safety and security are emphasized as critical attributes for Hawaiʻi as a destination. The report notes a high level of agreement among the U.S. 100k travelers and the avid traveler segments regarding these attributes—specifically, that Hawaiʻi is a fun and exciting destination, a dream destination for many, a place where travelers intend to save for future trips, and that the love of travel motivates their plans. The deck includes similar attribute and agreement analyses for other markets, and the fuller report is available on the HTA website.

Regarding Japan, the chosen traveler profile emphasizes affluent, avid, and active senior travelers. For Japanese travelers, safety and security remain highly important, and there is strong agreement with statements about Hawaiʻi as a safe, secure destination. For Canada, the profile includes older avid travelers and senior travelers, with value for money marking as a very important consideration. The bottom lines show that safe and secure destinations resonate across markets, reinforcing Hawaii's positioning in traveler perceptions. When Hawaiʻi is viewed as an aspirational destination, there is substantial agreement among the 100k Canadian average traveler and a notable level of agreement among long-distance and older Canadian travelers as well. The deck also includes material for Australia, though that content isn't summarized here. The section ends by noting that the Japanese team has selected the average traveler profiles that emphasize safety and security as central to traveler expectations, and these insights inform market tailoring and messaging. If needed, the fuller traveler profile deck and related materials are available in the HTA packet and on the HTA website.

Co-Vice Chair Agas thanked Ms. Chun for the great data.

Mr. Uchiyama discussed Ms. Chun's points regarding the Mexico market, noting that hotels are beginning to receive inquiries about Mexico, though the duration of this elevated interest remains uncertain. He then shifted to the CEO report, specifically page 11, which presents the backlog of business in the convention center. He observed that historically the cycle for citywide convention business has spanned five, seven, and ten years, but that in the aftermath of COVID, it appears to have shortened to three, five, and seven years. The current Mexico situation; however, is viewed as creating an additional opportunity within citywide convention business. Mr. Uchiyama expressed concern that the existing backlog may reflect past experiences with the facility and the uncertainty surrounding whether the convention center project would be completed. He relayed Ms. Garcia's reassurance that the project is on track and anticipated to perform better than before. Nevertheless, he emphasized the importance of focusing on 2028 and 2029 to ensure that, once the convention center comes back online, it is fully utilized. He underscored the need for strong support for the sales teams and for collaboration with the Hawaiʻi Convention Center (HCC) to promote the venue, describing this as top-of-mind.

There were no further questions or comments.

8. Report by the Strategic Plan Permitted Interaction Group

Member Fischer commended Ms. Anderson and her staff for delivering a solid foundation for the plan in collaboration with the contracting team, noting that the committee could refine and massage the plan to enhance its impact and clarity. He previewed that Ms. Anderson would provide additional detail and outlined the planned protocol for reviewing the plan. Specifically, Mr. Anderson would deliver a PowerPoint presentation on the plan, after which it would be presented to all Board members later in the week. Following that presentation, board members would have an opportunity to review the plan on their own, culminating in a special board meeting where discussions would take place. For today, the agenda centers on a high-level presentation with no in-depth discussion, reserving substantive discussion for a later date. The committee has met over the past four Fridays, affirming the HTA's current mission statement and continuing into the next Strategic Plan. The mission statement emphasizes strategically managing Hawaii's tourism in a sustainable manner aligned with economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, community desires, and visitor industry needs.

The committee's strategic focus centers on three pillars: brand marketing, experience development, and tourism leadership. In brief terms, under brand marketing, the aim is to grow the economic value of Hawaii's tourism without overburdening island capacity, as measured by metrics such as visitor spending growth relative to visitor volume, visitor message recall, return on ad spend, brand strength, and distribution across shoulder seasons and islands. Experience development is defined as ensuring tourism delivers more economic benefits to Hawaii's residents by connecting visitors with uniquely Hawaiian experiences, local arts, culture, and products, as measured by visitor-resident satisfaction. Across the four initial sessions, the group progressed from introducing the chair and vice chair, and recapping the plan development process, to reviewing guiding principles and the pillars, with a focus on shoulder seasons across the pillars. In the second session, guiding principles were reviewed alongside the three pillars, with longer discussions about experience development and tourism leadership focusing on community benefits, the Destination Management Action Plan (DMAP), and the streamlining of strategies and tactics. The third session covered streamlined strategies and tactics for each pillar, the consideration of key performance indicators (KPIs) for each pillar, and how HTA activities contribute to these KPIs. The fourth session finalized the brand marketing and visitor experiences KPIs and additional measures, added film tourism to visitor experiences, discussed illegal and legal short-term rentals and how they should fit into the Strategic Plan, and explored opportunities for further collaboration with the University of Hawaii's School of Travel Industry Management, including workforce development. Ms. Anderson noted that all of this content would be covered in the upcoming PowerPoint.

The three pillars are supported by detailed strategies and tactics guiding day-to-day HTA activities. Under brand marketing, strategies include identifying and expanding marketing outreach to attract higher-spending, higher-value traveler segments; energizing the Hawaiʻi brand; strengthening Hawaii's competitiveness for meetings, conventions, and incentives (MCI travel); identifying optimal distribution channels and high-value traveler segments for each island; and educating and engaging all visitors to travel responsibly in Hawaiʻi. For experience development, strategies include establishing an HTA experience development program; supporting the enhancement of major attractions and experiences to improve Hawaii's competitiveness for high-value visitors and major events; strengthening pathways for local entrepreneurs, creators, and producers to participate in the tourism economy; advancing understanding and preservation of Hawaiian culture; and maintaining a data-driven destination management approach while continuing to support Hawaii's sustainability goals. For tourism leadership, strategies focus on clarifying and strengthening HCA's role as a leader in Hawaiʻi tourism; formalizing integrity partnerships; strengthening island-based collaboration; proactively communicating and supporting workforce development; building long-term resilience of the tourism economy; and strengthening Hawaii's convention center as an economic hub.

Ms. Anderson opened by acknowledging the ongoing work of the Strategic Plan Permitted Interaction Group and thanking Ms. Orton as Chair, Danny Ojiri as Vice Chair, Co-Vice Chairs Kimberly Agas, and the members Guy, Wong, and Elmore. She expressed appreciation for the staff's guidance over the past weeks and framed the effort as a return to basics: building demand while ensuring an exceptional visitor experience and translating these efforts into economic benefits for residents, improved quality of life, and a thriving visitor industry. She reviewed the slide previously covered by Ms. Orton and reiterated the mission: to strategically manage Hawaiʻi tourism in a sustainable manner aligned with economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, community desires, and visitor industry needs. The proposed vision for 2030, Hawaiʻi thriving through collective actions to grow economic vitality, strengthen collaborations, and fulfill the shared Kuleana to build a visitor economy where people, place, and culture prosper together, was highlighted and anchored in guiding principles drawn from the original Kikumu Strategic Plan, including Hoʻokipa, Mālama 'Āina, aloha, Lōkahi, Pūlama i ka hoʻoilina, Aloha 'Āina, Alakaʻi, Hoʻoulu, Hoʻokahua, Palekana, and He kulana i mahaloʻia. She emphasized that the pillars and strategies would drive the plan forward, with tactics to be detailed in the forthcoming draft.

Ms. Anderson reaffirmed the three pillars for the HTA Strategic Plan: brand marketing, experience development, and tourism leadership. Brand marketing aims to differentiate Hawaiʻi through branding that reflects its unique culture, local values, and responsible community engagement, while driving economic vitality and ensuring targeted, high-value visitor segments with measurable returns on investment. Experience development focuses on community-first, sustainable, and regenerative visitor experiences that revitalize communities, create economic opportunities, and meet the interests of high-value visitors, with outcomes measured by visitor satisfaction. Tourism leadership seeks to regain confidence among the legislature, industry, and community by leading tourism and partnering with state agencies, counties, the visitor industry, and community partners to build a resilient visitor economy, while promoting clear, collaborative communication to residents and visitors alike. She clarified that the slide presented the pillars and strategies, with tactics to be appended in the Strategic Plan draft to show how staff will implement the plan over the next five years. Ms. Orton had already covered the strategies; Ms. Anderson noted that the next version would include detailed tactics under each strategy.

She then enumerated the high-level key performance indicators associated with the plan: average daily visitor spending, total visitor expenditures, visitor satisfaction, and resident sentiment. These KPIs would be tracked in collaboration with Ms. Chun and the Tourism Research Branch to ensure reliable data from surveys. Under each pillar, high-level KPIs were outlined. For Brand Marketing, the indicators include average daily visitor spend, growth in visitor expenditures—specifically, growth in expenditures expected to outpace growth in visitor arrivals—plus metrics such as return on advertising spend, brand strength (intended travel), visitor message recall, and shoulder-season distribution across islands. For Experience Development, the focus is on visitor satisfaction—specifically exceeding expectations in major market areas—and resident sentiment, measured by perceptions of tourism benefits and local impacts, and again average daily spending. For Tourism Leadership, the KPIs include resident sentiment, tourism's positive effects on families, partner satisfaction with HTA collaborations, and evidence of increased funding as signals of trust with the legislature.

Ms. Anderson indicated that additional measures would appear in the draft Strategic Plan to be shared the following day, emphasizing a commitment to accountability, with clear outcomes and outputs, and to improved communication with Board members, the public, and legislators. She thanked the Strategic Planning Permitted Interaction Group, along with Better Destinations, Cathy Ritter, and her team, for their contributions. She reminded attendees that the plan is data-driven, incorporating input from interviews conducted by Ms. Ritter with Board members, key legislators, government officials, visitor industry leaders, and community leaders, as well as a public survey and community webinars conducted in the latter part of 2025. The results and feedback were used to draft the plan, which was reviewed by the HTA staff to ensure alignment with the desired direction and available resources. The process was described as a collaborative effort, with the Permitted Interaction Group refining and steering the plan.

Ms. Anderson outlined the next steps: the Board would receive the draft Strategic Plan for review, followed by a Special Board meeting in the second week of March to discuss the plan, with the aim of Board approval so it could move to the director and governor for final approvals and then proceed to implementation. She concluded by reiterating gratitude to the group and all contributors for their time and effort, particularly noting the Friday afternoon sessions over the past four weeks and the input gathered through interviews, surveys, community hearings, and webinars.

Co-Vice Chair Agas thanked everyone for their great, hard work.

Co-Vice Chair McCully asked whether the meeting she was proposing would be around Tourism Day and whether it would be an in-person meeting.

Ms. Anderson asked what the Co-Vice Chairs would like to do. Co-Vice Chair McCully said it would be helpful for some people from neighbor islands who come in for the meeting and then stay over for Tourism Day. And it would be a way for people to walk the aisles, see their local legislators, and interact as representatives of the HTA.

Ms. Anderson agreed.

Co-Vice Chair McCully asked about the Strategic Plan. He asked if it was the contract they gave to Ms. Ritter to follow up on the governance study.
Ms. Anderson said that was correct, and it was a competitive process, and her company was selected to help them with the Strategic Plan. She said she would be distributing the draft of this the following day.

Co-Vice Chair McCully asked what the result was from Ms. Ritter's contract. Ms. Anderson said it was to help them develop their 2026 through 2030, and she would distribute it the following day.

Co-Vice Chair McCully, offered guidance on how to approach the governance work and the Strategic Plan moving forward. He referenced the original governance study report—the case for reinventing Hawaiʻi tourism oversight—produced by Ms. Ritter's group, noting that while it isn't homework, it can serve as a valuable source document or baseline for the Advisory Board to become familiar with. He then shifted to the practical purpose of the Strategic Plan, acknowledging the committee's progress and noting that those who have served on the Board and participated in the governance study are familiar with the pillars discussed today. He emphasized that a key role of the Advisory Board now is to help staff focus on accomplishable, tangible, achievable actions that can yield measurable results. In this context, he urged the group to identify KPIs as the core reporting mechanism, given that the existing list of strategies is extensive and may be difficult to implement all at once. His suggestion was to consider which items represent "low-hanging fruit"—those that can be realistically achieved in the near term and demonstrate clear, reportable improvements through the KPIs. He proposed that the Board's role could include recommending to staff a prioritized focus based on their collective experience in the communities, ensuring that efforts align with what is feasible and impactful. In sum, he stressed the value of using KPIs to guide governance focus, determine which strategic initiatives to pursue first, and leverage the Board's market and community experience to inform prioritization and resource allocation.

Member Guy echoed the appreciation of the staff and team.

9. Report by the Administrative Standing Committee on their Meeting Held on February 25, 2026

a. Discussion and/or Approval of the Job Description of the HTA President and CEO

Co-Vice Chair McCully said the Committee is advising the General Board that what they have is a significantly different job description and benefits package, and that when the CEO Permitted Interaction Group meets to continue the CEO they will take that into consideration.

Co-Vice Chair McCully made a motion to move. Member Guy seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Discussion and/or Approval of the Bylaws of the Hawaii Tourism Authority

Co-Vice Chair McCully opened with a housekeeping note, acknowledging a correction made by Mr. Uchiyama. He referenced language changes regarding the Film Tourism Committee, noting that Section 6 needed adjustment. Member Ojiri confirmed the specific edits: renaming the committee from the Film Production Tourism Committee to the Film Tourism Committee, and modifying the committee mission statement guidelines to reflect initiatives that promote Hawaiʻi through film, television, and integrated marketing; these initiatives should support economic development and authentic representation of the state, and the mission should commit to guiding and supporting initiatives that promote Hawaiʻi as a film tourism destination through film, television, and integrated marketing, fostering economic development while ensuring authentic representation of the state. Co-Vice Chair McCully characterized the changes as minor corrections and encouraged all standing committees to review their own mission statements or wording for accuracy. He thanked the participants for their efforts, specifically acknowledging the Film Tourism Committee, and concluded by noting that the adjustments would be implemented going forward.

Co-Vice Chair McCully made a motion, and it was seconded by Member Elmore. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Report by the Film Production Tourism Committee on their Meeting Held on February 19, 2026

Member Elmore provided a concise, high-level recap of the committee's recent activities, noting that minutes will capture the full detail. She began by confirming that the group reviewed and adjusted the mission and the corresponding title to ensure alignment with the updated mission, describing these as minor edits. She highlighted a discussion with Karen Ewald from the State Foundation for Culture and the Arts about the Hawaiʻi Film and TV Pop Up Museum. Karen Ewald, the Executive Director of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, shared logistical aspects of the plan, including that an installation typically requires three to four weeks to deploy; however, due to scheduling and other Capitol Modern commitments, the pop-up is unlikely to occur before 2027. A positive takeaway was that costs are not expected to be excessive, and that tasks related to creating, shipping, and installation would be handled by the State Foundation, given their expertise.

Member Elmore then turned to HIFA, the Hawaiʻi International Film Association, and summarized a robust presentation from George Russell, the association's Assistant Director. She urged Board members to review the minutes once released, noting that Russell's PowerPoint would be included. The history and context of HIFA were summarized: HIFA began in 1987 as a nonprofit comprised of bilingual location coordinators and production managers. Member Elmore referenced historical production expenditures, citing $8 million in 2015, peaking at $12 million in 2017, and $9 million in 2019, illustrating the economic impact of film productions connected to Hawaiʻi. She emphasized that this activity is not funded by the HTA or the state but represents "free advertising" for Hawaiʻi, with visible placements in Japanese subway stations and taxis at no cost to the state, while recognizing the substantial outlay by Japanese advertisers.

Labor representatives also contributed, underscoring the program's importance to workers. Tui Scanlan from IATSE, the international trustee, spoke on behalf of the behind-the-scenes workforce in film and TV, noting that meaningful wages support workers' professional development and skill enhancement, particularly on productions involving Japan and Korea. Member Elmore acknowledged the value of the Haifa and labor perspectives and thanked HIFA's George Russell for their informative presentation.

She mentioned that administrative items were not repeated since they had been covered previously, and she noted the postponement of the discussion on the RFP feasibility and related DBEDT's Creative Industries Division (CID) director Georja Skinner's absence, planning to revisit these topics at the April meeting. Concluding, Member Elmore invited questions from the Board, staff, or attendees and signaled that further details would be contained in the forthcoming minutes. If desired, the minutes could be formatted with standardized headers, include attendee names, timestamps, and extract any actionable items or owners for follow-up.

Co-Vice Chair Agas thanked Member Elmore.

There were no questions online or public testimony.

11. Discussion and/or Action on Revisions to the Standing Committee Charters

Mr. Uchiyama reported that this agenda item was covered in section 9B.

12. Review and Discussion on Current Legislative Bills

Ms. Radke welcomed everyone to Tab 12 and acknowledged the return of Member West. She signaled that she would report on what has been done and invite input from the rest of the group throughout, pausing to address questions as they arise. She began by recounting the process they had used to review the 70 bills the committee initially faced. Since the last meeting, the legislature has pared many of those bills down, and the team has documented which bills the HTA supports, opposes, or comments on and monitors. She noted that testimony for upcoming hearings must typically be submitted within about 48 hours of notice, with the usual cycle starting when notices arrive on Friday, followed by staff discussions that reference prior HTA testimony, the relevant resolution numbers, and the Board's guidance. The process involves evaluating operational considerations with Ms. Anderson present in the meetings, then coordinating with DBEDT to determine the HTA's formal position—opposed, supported, or commented—and drafting the testimony. Both Ms. Anderson and Mr. Uchiyama sign off on the drafts before they are submitted to DBEDT for review and approval by the director. The final testimonies are then circulated to the Board to provide adequate opportunity for review, though Ms. Radke acknowledged that the tight timeline is not ideal.

Ms. Radke then opened the floor to questions about the process before moving on to discuss the bills the HTA has supported. She explained that support generally aligns with bills that are part of the administration's package, bills that restore procurement exemptions or funding, and those closely aligned with the HTA's mission, Strategic Plan, and legislative responsibilities. Regarding bills the HTA opposes, she noted that there are three such items, all of which seek to dissolve the HTA either in full or in part and are inconsistent with Hawai'i Revised Statutes (HRS) 201B; the HTA has submitted testimony in opposition. She clarified that these three bills have been deferred, meaning the committee decided not to hear them, effectively rendering them dead. Ms. Radke offered to discuss these three bills further if anyone wished to delve into their specifics.

Turning to the bills HTA supports, she highlighted several notable items. Two measures that promote film marketing and promotion—HB1590 and a related item on the list—are moving through the process, with hearings occurred currently. Additionally, HB62602 HD2 would create a DBEDT Sustainable Tourism Infrastructure Matching Grant Program for one-time capital projects tied to measurable sustainability and climate resilience; the HTA views this as closely aligned with its mission and Strategic Plan and therefore has supported it. She also mentioned two sports-related bills generating particular enthusiasm: one is a study to assess the benefits and costs of sports tourism, which is queued for the third reading on March 5, and SB2627, which aims to restore the HTA's procurement exemption for sports marketing contracts, another measure the director, Louis Vu, has expressed support for.

In contrast, she summarized the three opposition items as attempts to dissolve the HTA in full or in part, noting these are inconsistent with the state's governing statutes and have been deferred. She did not go into detail on those three during this briefing, but invited questions if anyone wished to discuss their specifics. Concluding, Ms. Radke reminded attendees that the discussion would continue with questions and that the Board would receive the testimonies as they are submitted to the legislature, recognizing the tight timelines involved. She invited questions about the process, the specific bills, or the status of those actions, and she offered to provide deeper detail on any item upon request.

Co-Vice chair McCully asked if the position is established through the executive committee working with DBEDT director.

Ms. Anderson said that is guided by the resolution that the Board passed last month.

Co-Vice Chair McCully underscored a key governance point: while the resolution expresses broad principles, the actual positions on specific bills require careful, bill-by-bill review to determine alignment with the HTA's goals. He distinguished between existential bills that threaten the HTA's existence, bills that are simply deferred, and bills like SB2906, which are moving forward in SD1 and appear to have support in both houses but would substantially amend the HTA. He explained that SB2906 seeks to establish a tourism liaison officer within the governor's cabinet, with the goal of transferring destination management and stewardship responsibilities from the HTA and its Advisory Board to the tourism liaison office, thereby placing branding as the HTA's singular focus going forward. Ms. Radke concurred, clarifying that the difference between SB2906 and an existential dissolution bill lies in the absence of dissolution; SB 2906 would not dismantle the HTA but would reallocate functions and alter governance. She noted that because SB2906 does not dissolve the HTA, the committee considered it differently—viewing it as a bill that could require a nuanced commentary or targeted positions rather than outright opposition.

Co-Vice Chair McCully opened by informing the Board that he had offered comments on SB2906 during the committee hearing, noting he happened to be there for another reason and decided to provide his input. He urged all members to access the legislative website, obtain a copy of SB2906 if they do not already have one, and follow its progress, as it appears to be moving forward. Ms. Radke responded that SB2906 is now in SD1 and has been referred onward; she anticipated additional hearings but noted there have been substantial changes since it first appeared. She opened the floor to questions, inviting Member Guy to weigh in, though Member Guy indicated he could not see the testimony. Co-Vice Chair McCully clarified that he attended for another purpose and provided verbal comments, explaining that SB2906 could become an omnibus bill with language that could be broadened or contracted, and could potentially be deferred. He warned that the bill's title is broad, covering tourism, and suggested it could encompass a wide range of provisions, possibly serving as the HTA's vehicle in the 2029 or 2026 session, depending on how it evolves.

Ms. Radke then circled back to confirm whether there were additional comments on the previously opposed bills (numbers 47, 1944, or 2807). With no further comments, she announced a shift to commenting and monitoring. She explained that this category includes bills that touch the HTA, its responsibilities, or related areas such as tourism administration and cruise shipping. She emphasized the importance of discussing these bills in more depth with the team to gauge positions. She proceeded to highlight a couple of quick items, starting with HB1623, which concerns the HTA's participation versus via our CEO. They filed comments to address an administrative issue, and otherwise, the committee appeared largely aligned on this bill.

She signaled that there would be additional discussion on the remaining bills under the commentary and monitoring category in subsequent deliberations.

Ms. Radke began by flagging HB1800 and HB2500 as upcoming budget-related bills that would be taken up in the near term. The committee will submit testimony on these budget items as they pertain to the HTA's responsibilities. HB1950 was discussed as a notably interesting case. The staff considered supporting it, but the HTA chose to file a comment rather than support it. The bill would establish a state-led marketing and branding special fund using a share of the transient accommodations tax (TAT), with the proposal showing that a percentage of TAT allocations would return to support tourism. The issue, as the HTA saw it, was that the bill would create an additional special fund on top of the existing Tourism Special Fund, which raised concerns about duplicative funding mechanisms. The committee noted that the draft included a 15% allocation, which the HTA had not requested, so the current language was blanked out for the moment. The HTA remains supportive of the concept in principle, provided the language is clarified so that allocations are based on a defined percentage of TAT rather than a fixed amount. Ms. Radke indicated that they hope the language will be reintroduced for further discussion. The overarching rationale remains that allocating a percentage of TAT has historically been an effective mechanism for funding marketing and balancing the tourism budget.

Co-Vice Chair Agas sought to clarify whether the fund would require the DBEDT to submit an annual marketing and branding tourism management plan, versus the HTA's current approach to determining marketing dollars and island-focused priorities. Ms. Radke clarified that the proposed plan language in the bill did not appear to be substantially different from the HTA's current operations. However, she acknowledged that the language needs alignment. Member Ojiri explained that historically, the HTA did receive a percentage of TAT; under the bill's current drafting, the HTA would instead be assigned a total amount, which would revert to a percentage draw if the bill's final language returns to that structure. He noted that the original 15% figure, if applied to today's TAT collections, would translate to roughly $121 million in spending—an amount the HTA favored, but the bill's direct percentage was currently removed or blanked out. He reiterated that the intent is to create dedicated funding so the HTA can plan longer-term and deliver sustainable marketing across markets, with supplemental increases allocated based on plan use.

Ms. Radke noted that SB2906 would not dissolve the HTA, but would reorganize responsibilities by transferring destination management and stewardship from the HTA and the Advisory Boar to a Tourism Liaison Office, potentially making branding the sole focus for the HTA going forward. She contrasted SB2906 with the existential dissolution bills, explaining that since SB2906 retains the HTA's existence in some form, the committee's stance would be more nuanced—potentially comments rather than outright opposition, depending on strategic fit and timing. The discussion then touched on whether the committee would be comfortable with a multi-year budgeting approach should the funding mechanism be established, allowing the HTA to plan further ahead for contracts and market initiatives.

The conversation then shifted to HB2403 and SB3267, which propose reducing the HTA Advisory Board from 12 to seven members and restricting appointments to lists from specified tourism industry organizations. Co-Vice Chair McCully expressed concern that seven industry-only appointees would be unlikely to survive in the context of typical state boards, which usually include non-public-facing members. Ms. Radke noted that the bill had not yet come up for hearing but should be reviewed if it does. Member Ojiri provided context that the bill would require industry-based appointments and implied a risk of overly industry-centric governance. The group then discussed SB2131, which ties available HTA funding to the Tourism Functional Plan, and HB2483 (similar to HB1623), noting that both relate to functional planning and CEO designee considerations. SB2906 had already been mentioned in the broader governance discussion.

The Boar then touched on SB3332 SD1, which was originally heard and later deferred; it is scheduled for a hearing on March 3. There was also a bill to impose a moratorium on state-funded travel by certain agencies through June 30, 2028, prompted by concerns raised in Civil Beat regarding the Department of Education's travel reporting. HB1529 would reduce quorum requirements, but Ms. Radke indicated there would be no immediate comment on that. The committee also discussed HCC-related bills HB1609 and SB2074 regarding naming rights for stadiums and convention centers, both of which had been deferred as of the meeting. The cruise bills under consideration included SB634 (carried over) and the pair HB2195 and SB2698, which would establish a per-passenger head fee to fund a cruise ship special fund for harbor infrastructure improvements, with retroactive repeal provisions and alignment with DOT's energy security goals for 2030. The cruise industry advocates favored the per-head fee because it targets the passenger portion of cruise rates rather than the full room rate included in the

TAT, arguing it more fairly distributes costs. The committee acknowledged the potential economic impact on tourism-related businesses and the broader implications for Hawaii's tourism strategy.

Member Fischer shared a personal perspective, noting that he submitted written and virtual testimony on the cruise-related bills. He reflected on the historical context of Act 96, acknowledging the tense discussions in earlier stages and the cruise industry's reliance on certain carriers and the broader tourism ecosystem. He described the Pride of America and related stakeholders as essential to Hawaii's economy and noted concerns about potential adverse effects if cruise ships were discouraged or removed. Fischer emphasized that the current approach—allocating TAT as a percentage rather than the entire fare—aligns with fair distribution of marketing costs and benefits. He expressed satisfaction with the direction of the bills and the industry's cautious optimism, alongside ongoing discussions with industry lobbyists and government officials, including the governor.

Next steps: The conversation suggested continuing review of the budget bills (HB1800, HB2500) and the HTA-related measures; a continued emphasis on SB2906 and how its governance implications affect the HTA's role and funding; further analysis of SB2131, HB2483, and other related measures; and ongoing engagement with the cruise-related bills to monitor potential impacts and industry feedback.

Ms. Radke kicked off by guiding the Board through upcoming budget-related bills and the HTA's approach to testifying. HB1800 and HB2500 were highlighted as budget bills that would be addressed in the near term, with the HTA planning to submit testimony on those items as they pertain to the HTA's responsibilities. HB1950 was discussed as particularly noteworthy: HTA considered supporting it but ultimately filed testimony as a comment rather than full support. The bill intends to establish a state-led marketing and branding special fund using a share of the transient accommodations tax (TAT). While the HTA supports the general concept of directing a portion of TAT to marketing, the draft proposed a separate special fund in addition to the existing tourism funding, which the HTA found problematic. The draft reportedly included an assumed 15% allocation that the HTA did not request, so the number was blanked out for now. HTA remains supportive in principle, provided the language is corrected to ensure allocations are made via a defined percentage of TAT, not a fixed amount. There is a hope that the language will reappear for further discussion.

Co-Vice Chair Agas sought clarification about how expenditures would be allocated, distinguishing between whether annual marketing dollars would be guided by a DBEDT plan or by the HTA's current approach to marketing by island and priorities. Ms. Radke indicated that the bill's plan language did not appear to be substantially different from the HTA's current practice, though alignment is needed. Member Ojiri reminded the group that the HTA historically received a percentage of TAT; under the bill's current drafting, the HTA would be assigned a total amount, potentially reverting to a percentage draw depending on final language. He noted that the original 15% figure would translate to roughly $121 million in spending under current TAT collections, which the HTA favored, but the explicit percentage was removed. The aim, per Member Ojiri, is to create dedicated funding to enable long-range planning and sustained marketing across markets, with supplemental increases allocated based on strategic plans.

Ms. Radke noted that SB2906 would not dissolve the HTA but would transfer destination management and stewardship responsibilities to a Tourism Liaison Office, potentially making branding the HTA's sole focus going forward. She contrasted SB2906 with existential dissolution bills, explaining that SB2906's retention of the HTA means the committee may respond with comments rather than outright opposition, depending on timing and strategic fit. The discussion then touched on whether the funding mechanism could support multi-year budgeting, enabling the HTA to plan contracts and market initiatives further ahead.

The conversation then moved to several other bills. HB2403 and SB3267 were discussed; these would reduce the HTA Advisory Board from 12 to seven members, with appointments restricted to lists from specific tourism industry organizations. Co-Vice Chair McCully expressed concerns that seven industry-only appointees would be unlikely to withstand the broader expectations for state boards, which typically include non-industry perspectives. Ms. Radke acknowledged the bill had not yet been heard, but should be reviewed if it comes up. Member Ojiri provided context that the bill's design would center on industry-based appointments, underscoring risks to the breadth of governance.

The discussion then covered SB2131, which ties HTA funding to the Tourism Functional Plan, and HB2483, which is similar to HB1623; both were flagged for consideration, with SB2906 having already been addressed earlier in the session. SB3332 SD1 had been scheduled to be heard on March 3 after being deferred earlier. A separate item proposed a moratorium on state-funded travel by certain agencies through June 30, 2028, prompted by concerns raised in Civil Beat regarding the Department of Education's travel reporting. HB1529 would reduce quorum requirements; Ms. Radke indicated no immediate comment on that bill. For stadium and convention center matters, HCC-related bills HB1609 and SB2074 had been deferred as of the meeting. The cruise-related bills included SB634 (carried over from last session) and HB2195/SB2698, which propose a per-passenger head fee to fund a cruise ship special fund for harbor infrastructure improvements, with a retroactive repeal provision. The cruise industry prefers the per-head approach because it targets the passenger portion rather than the entire fare, aligning with DOT's energy security goals for 2030. Member Fischer added a personal perspective, noting he submitted written and virtual testimony. He described the cruise bill's trajectory as a potential “exit” from tense debates into a more balanced approach that protects the cruise industry and local economies, acknowledging prior negotiations and the broader stakeholder landscape.

Next steps and housekeeping notes:

- Continue monitoring HB1800, HB2500 (budget-related), and HB1950 (subject to language fixes).
- Track SB2906’s progress and its governance implications for the HTA; determine whether to provide comments or support, depending on how the bill evolves.
- Monitor SB2131, HB2483, and related measures that tie the HTA funding to planning or organizational changes; prepare targeted positions as needed.
- Monitor the cruise-related bills (HB2195, SB2698, SB634) and the per-passenger head fee concept, including industry reactions and potential infrastructure outcomes.
- Continue evaluating the TAT discussion, ensuring any proposed changes preserve a clear nexus to the visitor industry and TAT’s role in marketing and destination management.
- The Board will review testimony drafts and maintain alignment with the resolution, prioritizing direct nexus to visitor experience and economic impacts.

There were no questions from online participants. Co-Vice Chair Agas thanked Ms. Radke’s presentation and being the resource for the Board members.

13. Presentation and Discussion on the HTA and Hawaiʻi Convention Center Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request***

The Board proceeded into Executive Session pursuant to HRS §92-5(a), which requires certain confidential information and the HTA's own exception about protecting Hawaii's competitive edge in tourism.

14. Adjournment

AG Cole reported that there was a presentation and a lengthy discussion on the HCC budget for Fiscal Year 2027, but no vote was taken. There were no comments from the public.

Co-Vice Chair Agas adjourned the meeting at 2:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheillane Reyes

Sheillane Reyes
Recorder