



*Maui Hotel & Lodging*  
ASSOCIATION

## **2024 Maui Hotel & Lodging's Legislative Priorities:**

MHLA's overall commitment is to foster a tourism industry that respects the needs of residents, contributes positively to the local economy, and maintains the integrity of Maui as a world-class destination.

- 1. HOUSING FOR DISPLACED RESIDENTS AND ATTAINABLE WORKFORCE HOUSING AND RENTALS FOR ALL:** MHLA recognizes the urgent need for comprehensive and compassionate support for Maui residents displaced by recent fires. The devastating impact on homes and communities demands a swift and effective response to the immediate housing crisis. We encourage collaboration among government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders to pool resources and expertise. A coordinated effort is essential to efficiently address the multifaceted challenges of providing housing solutions for those affected by the fires. We support the development and implementation of attainable housing initiatives tailored to the specific needs of displaced residents. This may include expedited approvals for temporary housing structures, financial assistance programs, and partnerships with local builders to construct affordable housing units rapidly. Additionally, we call for a review of regulatory barriers that may hinder the swift deployment of housing solutions. This includes streamlining permitting processes and temporarily relaxing certain zoning restrictions to facilitate the rapid construction of temporary and permanent housing options.
- 2. FINANCIAL RECOVERY SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES:** MHLA firmly advocates for the allocation of financial resources to support Maui businesses that have been adversely affected by the Maui fires. We recognize the vital role that local businesses play in the economic fabric of Maui. They contribute significantly to job creation, community development, and the overall well-being of residents. Providing financial support to these businesses is crucial for the economic recovery and sustainability of the island. By directing funds to Maui businesses, we aim to preserve existing jobs and stimulate the creation of new employment opportunities. Supporting businesses ensures that they can maintain their workforce, fostering stability and growth within the local job market. By taking a proactive stance in supporting Maui businesses through targeted funding initiatives, we believe that we can contribute to the island's economic recovery, resilience, and long-term prosperity. This approach aligns with our commitment to fostering a vibrant and sustainable business environment for the benefit of all residents of Maui.
- 3. WATER INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSMISSION [MAUI COUNTY]:** MHLA recognizes the critical importance of water infrastructure and transmission systems in Maui County for sustaining communities, agriculture, and the environment. By adopting these principles and actively

participating in collaborative efforts, we believe that Maui County can ensure a resilient, sustainable, and equitable water infrastructure and transmission system that meets the community's needs while preserving the island's natural resources. The Visitor industry provides \$230 million or 54% of total Real Property Tax (RPT) and is estimated to bring in \$60 million in MCAT. It is time to use those funds for additional water infrastructure and transmission.

4. **TAXES AND FEES:** MHLA supports an equitable and transparent taxation system that considers the economic contributions of the tourism industry while ensuring fairness for all stakeholders. Tax burdens should be distributed proportionately and reflect a balance between the community's needs and the hospitality sector's economic viability. County Real Property taxes continue to increase yearly, even though increased property value assessments generate a substantial increase in tax revenues. This situation is not sustainable, and MHLA will continue to lobby for property tax relief on the county level. On the state level, we oppose any bills aimed at raising taxes or fees on the industry, especially when attempting to reemerge from the pandemic and now the Maui fires. We will advocate for existing assessed fees to have a nexus and fund areas such as infrastructure, parks, destination management efforts, and enforcement of illegal vacation rentals. Recognizing the vulnerability of relying solely on tourism-related revenue, MHLA supports efforts to diversify the local economy. Taxes and fees should be structured to encourage investment in other sectors, promoting long-term economic stability for the community. By adhering to these principles, MHLA aims to contribute to developing a taxation system that supports the economic health of Maui while maintaining a sustainable and competitive tourism industry. This balanced approach aligns with our commitment to the well-being of the hospitality sector and the broader community.
5. **DESTINATION MANAGEMENT:** The Maui Hotel and Lodging Association recognizes the critical importance of effective destination management in preserving the natural beauty, cultural heritage, and economic vitality of Maui. MHLA is committed to promoting and implementing sustainable tourism practices that minimize the environmental impact of tourism activities. This includes our continued work with HTA and CNHA on the Maui Nui Destination Management Action Plan (DMAP), supporting initiatives to conserve natural resources, reduce waste, and preserve Maui's unique ecosystems for the benefit of both residents and visitors. Embracing innovative solutions and technology is essential for effective destination management. MHLA supports the integration of smart technologies, data analytics, and other tools to enhance visitor experiences, optimize resource utilization, and manage tourism flows efficiently.

## 2024 POSITIONS STATEMENTS

These are the MHLA's positions on various issues before legislative bodies, state and county agencies, non-governmental organizations, or the community. Our overall commitment is to foster a tourism industry that respects the needs of residents, contributes positively to the local economy, and maintains the integrity of Maui as a world-class destination.

### TAXES AND FEES

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### VISITOR INDUSTRY

- **DESTINATION MANAGEMENT:** The Maui Hotel and Lodging Association recognizes the critical importance of effective destination management in preserving Maui's natural beauty, cultural heritage, and economic vitality. MHLA is committed to promoting and implementing sustainable tourism practices that minimize the environmental impact of tourism activities. This includes our continued work with HTA and CNHA on the Maui Nui Destination Management Action Plan (DMAP), supporting initiatives to conserve natural resources, reduce waste, and preserve Maui's unique ecosystems for residents and visitors. Embracing innovative solutions and technology is essential for effective destination management. MHLA supports integrating smart technologies, data analytics, and other tools to enhance visitor experiences, optimize resource utilization, and manage tourism flows efficiently.
- **TRANSIENT VACATION RENTALS AND ILLEGAL VACATION RENTALS:** MHLA advocates for transparent and enforceable regulations governing transient vacation rentals. We support collaboration between the hospitality industry, local government, and relevant stakeholders to establish clear guidelines that promote fair competition, protect consumers, and ensure compliance with all applicable laws. MHLA strongly advocates for strict enforcement of regulations governing vacation rentals. All lodging providers, including vacation rentals, should adhere to local laws, zoning ordinances, and licensing requirements to ensure fair competition, consumer protection, and community well-being. We also believe all vacation units need to be legally

permitted, must pay the taxes our government imposes, and adhere to all Federal and State Codes and Regulations. We support effective regulation, enforcement, and community engagement to strike a balance between the tourism industry and the quality of life for residents.

- **WATER INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSMISSION:** MHLA recognizes the critical importance of water infrastructure and transmission systems in Maui County for sustaining communities, agriculture, and the environment. By adopting these principles and actively participating in collaborative efforts, we believe that Maui County can ensure a resilient, sustainable, and equitable water infrastructure and transmission system that meets the community's needs while preserving the island's natural resources. The Visitor industry provides \$230 million or 54% of total Real Property Tax (RPT) and is estimated to bring in \$60 million in MCAT. It is time to use those funds for additional water infrastructure and transmission.

## COMMUNITY

- **HOUSING FOR DISPLACED RESIDENTS AND ATTAINABLE WORKFORCE HOUSING AND RENTALS FOR ALL:** MHLA recognizes the urgent need for comprehensive and compassionate support for Maui residents displaced by recent fires. The devastating impact on homes and communities demands a swift and effective response to the immediate housing crisis. We encourage collaboration among government agencies, non-profit organizations, and community stakeholders to pool resources and expertise. A coordinated effort is essential to efficiently address the multifaceted challenges of providing housing solutions for those affected by the fires. We support the development and implementation of attainable housing initiatives tailored to the specific needs of displaced residents. This may include expedited approvals for temporary housing structures, financial assistance programs, and partnerships with local builders to construct affordable housing units rapidly. Additionally, we call for a review of regulatory barriers that may hinder the swift deployment of housing solutions. This includes streamlining permitting processes and temporarily relaxing certain zoning restrictions to facilitate the rapid construction of temporary and permanent housing options.
- **BEACH RESTORATION EFFORTS:** The Maui Hotel and Lodging Association recognizes the vital role that beaches play in the allure and sustainability of Maui as a premier tourist destination. We advocate for active community engagement in beach restoration projects. Collaboration between the hospitality industry, State and County government, residents, and environmental organizations ensures that restoration efforts align with the values and priorities of the community. Inclusive decision-making processes lead to projects that are more sustainable and culturally sensitive. Recognizing the challenges posed by climate change, MHLA supports beach restoration projects that consider the long-term impacts of rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and other climate-related factors. Implementing adaptive measures ensures the resilience of restored beaches in the face of changing environmental conditions. MHLA aims to contribute to preserving and restoring Maui's beaches, recognizing their ecological, cultural, and recreational significance. Our commitment extends to fostering a collaborative and sustainable approach that ensures the well-being of the environment, the local community, and the tourism industry.
- **WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT:** We advocate for creating clear career pathways within the hospitality industry. Establishing programs facilitating upward mobility, skills development, and

mentorship opportunities encourages a motivated and loyal workforce, contributing to long-term employee retention and satisfaction. Given Maui's cultural diversity and the importance of cultural awareness in the hospitality sector, MHLA supports integrating cultural sensitivity training for hospitality workers. Training programs should emphasize respect for local customs, traditions, and the unique cultural heritage of Maui.

- **HOMELESSNESS:** MHLA advocates for a compassionate and understanding approach to homelessness. Recognizing the diverse factors that contribute to homelessness, including economic hardship, mental health issues, and substance abuse, we support initiatives that prioritize empathy, dignity, and respect for individuals experiencing homelessness. MHLA is committed to advocating for systemic changes that address the structural issues contributing to homelessness. This includes engaging with policymakers to influence legislation that promotes affordable housing, social services, and other systemic changes necessary to address the root causes of homelessness.
- **GAMBLING:** MHLA advocates for an inclusive and transparent process that involves community input and engagement when considering the introduction of gambling-related activities. Open dialogue ensures that residents' and stakeholders' concerns, values, and preferences are considered. If the decision is made to allow gambling, MHLA advocates for establishing a robust regulatory framework. Clear regulations and effective oversight are essential to ensure the integrity of gambling activities, protect consumers, and prevent potential negative consequences such as addiction and criminal activity.
- **CANNABIS:** The Maui Hotel and Lodging Association acknowledges the evolving landscape surrounding cannabis laws and regulations and recognizes the importance of carefully considering the potential impacts on the community and the hospitality industry. Before making any decision regarding the introduction or regulation of cannabis, MHLA supports conducting a thorough and unbiased impact assessment. This assessment should evaluate the potential social, economic, and cultural impacts on the community and the potential effects on the existing tourism industry.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- **DIVERSIFYING HAWAII'S ECONOMY:** The Maui Hotel and Lodging Association recognizes the importance of diversifying Hawaii's economy to enhance resilience, create sustainable job opportunities, and reduce reliance on a single industry. We support efforts to identify and invest in key sectors with growth potential. This includes industries such as technology, renewable energy, agriculture, filming, healthcare, and sustainable tourism. Strategic investments in these sectors can contribute to a more resilient and balanced economy.
- **IMPROVING GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY:** MHLA advocates for streamlining regulatory processes to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and foster a business-friendly environment. Simplifying permitting, licensing, and compliance procedures supports economic development and encourages investment. MHLA supports the integration of innovative technologies to enhance government services and operations. Adopting digital platforms, e-government solutions, and data-driven decision-making contributes to efficiency, accessibility, and responsiveness. We advocate for cost-effective delivery of public services.