

Resolution

No. 21-18

EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM, EMPHASIZING QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

WHEREAS, the United Nations World Tourism Organization defines the following:

- Sustainable tourism: “Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”; and
- Visitor carrying capacity: “The maximum number of people that may visit a tourist destination at the same time, without causing destruction of the physical, economic, sociocultural environment and an unacceptable decrease in the quality of visitors’ satisfaction”; and

WHEREAS, the visitor industry is important to the County as a major economic driver; and

WHEREAS, according to the Maui County General Plan 2030, the Maui County tourism goal is: “To strategically manage tourism on Maui, Moloka`i, and Lāna`i in a sustainable manner that promotes economic well-being, quality of life for residents, preservation of natural and cultural resources, and quality experiences for visitors”; and

WHEREAS, the Maui Island Plan’s Economic Development Objective 4.2.3.a is: “Promote a desirable island population by striving to not exceed an island-wide visitor population of roughly 33 percent of the resident population”; and

WHEREAS, according to the 2019 Maui County Data Book, the County surpassed its visitor carrying capacity from 2013 to 2018, the latest six years for which it collected data; and

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WHEREAS, the County's resources are limited, with tourists and residents competing for the same land, ocean, reefs, beaches, infrastructure, water, and wastewater treatment facilities; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic increases the need for increased social distance and has resulted in a decreased number of tourists to the County; and

WHEREAS, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the County's resources and environment were already negatively impacted by deteriorating reefs, excess traffic, and strained water and wastewater infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, island destinations have fragile ecosystems and low resiliency, unable to accommodate a continually increasing number of visitors; and

WHEREAS, according to a 2019 report published by the International Council on Clean Transportation, "the United Nations' International Civil Aviation Organization expects aviation emissions to triple by 2050, at which time aircraft might account for 25 percent of the global carbon budget"; and

WHEREAS, the visitor industry produces large quantities of carbon emissions, including from airplanes, rental cars, and hotels; and

WHEREAS, Resolution 20-94 encouraged visitor-industry businesses to have their guests sign the Mālama Maui County Pledge and encouraged the pledge be displayed in as many spaces throughout Maui County as possible; and

WHEREAS, according to a *Honolulu Civil Beat* article from August 8, 2020, titled "Scientists Find Larger Fish, Clearer Water During Hanauma Bay Closure," marine biologists and ecologists have seen the environment thrive during the time of COVID and the consequently reduced level of tourism; now, therefore,

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BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it values sustainable and strategically managed tourism—rather than an increasing quantity of tourists—to promote economic well-being, enhanced quality of life for residents, preservation of natural and cultural resources, and high-quality experiences for visitors;
2. That it acknowledges when tourism is sustainably maintained and the visitor footprint is manageable, Maui County can have a thriving ecosystem, supporting tourism, residents, and the local economy;
3. That it encourages the Hawai'i visitor industry to expand efforts to address environmental challenges, work with the community, and honor the shared responsibility to steward the land, water, and air;
4. That it will continue to build upon policies and create incentives to ensure the County's natural and cultural resources will be protected and enjoyed for generations to come;
5. That it urges the Maui Planning Commission to recognize the need to limit additional visitor accommodations, so as to:
 - a. Reduce stress on the County's infrastructure and environment;
 - b. Control the County's economic overdependence on tourism; and
 - c. Preserve the County's excellent reputation as a quality tourist destination; and
6. That certified copies of this resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Mazie Hirono, United States Senator; the Honorable Brian E. Schatz, United States Senator; the Honorable Kaiiali'i Kahele, United States Representative; the Honorable Scott Saiki, Speaker, Hawai'i State House of Representatives; the Honorable Ron Kouchi, President,

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Hawai'i State Senate; Maui County's delegation to the State Legislature; the Honorable David Y. Ige, Governor, State of Hawai'i; the Honorable Michael P. Victorino, Mayor, County of Maui; Michele Chouteau McLean, Planning Director, County of Maui; the Maui Planning Commission; Sherry Duong, Executive Director, Maui Visitors Bureau; Rod Antone, Executive Director, Maui Hotel and Lodging Association; John De Fries, President and CEO, Hawaii Tourism Authority; Board of Directors of Hawaii Tourism Authority; and Mufi Hannemann, President and CEO, Hawaii Lodging and Tourism Association.

paf:nas:21-033f

COUNCIL OF THE COUNTY OF MAUI

WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793

CERTIFICATION OF ADOPTION

It is **HEREBY CERTIFIED** that **RESOLUTION NO. 21-18** was adopted by the Council of the County of Maui, State of Hawaii, on the 5th day of February 2021, by the following vote:

MEMBERS	Alice L. LEE Chair	Keani N. W. RAWLINS-FERNANDEZ Vice-Chair	Gabe JOHNSON	Natalie A. KAMA	Kelly T. KING	Michael J. MOLINA	Tamara A. N. PALTIN	Shane M. SINENCI	Yuki Lei K. SUGIMURA
ROLL CALL	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye	Aye



COUNTY CLERK