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HONOLULU, HAWAII

Wednesday, May 02, 2012

Testimony in OPPOSITION to Bill 11: Relating to Public Parks

Dear Chairperson,

My name is Marc Rubenstein, I am the Vice President and General Manager of Royal Star Hawaii Motorcoach Tours and Destination Services. We are a tour bus operator on the island of Oahu employing over 80 local people. I am testifying in OPPOSITION of Bill 11 relating to Public Parks.

First, restricting access to public parks runs counter to public policy and to the goal of the Hawaii's main economic engine: tourism.

City parks are public, and Hawaii spends millions of tax dollars annually via the Hawaii Visitor's & Convention Bureau (HVCB) and Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) to attract visitors to Hawaii. In those efforts, you see the very public parks (such as Kailua Beach & Hanauma Bay) to which you are now trying to restrict access.

Attempting to restrict access through legislation creates artificial markets for those who do not play by the rules. It hurts good corporate citizens that try to comply. A perfect example of this "black market" is Hanauma Bay. Hanauma Bay contends daily with "taxi" operators that move numerous loads of visitors via 14 passenger vans in and out of the park under the guise of being "the public". The visitors still go to Hanauma Bay, they just go in a different, less friendly, less attractive, more costly manner.

Another example of legislation skewing reality is the Tantalus lookout. In this case, the city attempted to restrict access via reduced vehicle size and weight, resulting in dozens, if not hundreds of vehicles going up and down the roads at night, instead of just a few minibuses.

In contrast, the average motorcoach removes 30 cars from the road, and travel by motorcoach is the "greenest" form of mass transit, producing the smallest impact on our environment.

"Aloha Driven®"

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Finally, promoting tourism is in the best interests of the city & the state. Tourism is a green, renewable industry. As the largest segment of our economy, it creates jobs, raises enormous taxes (TAT, income and excise, which the City shares in) and provides our residents with a bright economic future, instead of seeking better alternatives away from home.

Please let this bill die. It is in complete opposition to our broader goals as a city and a community.

Thank you,

Marc Rubenstein

Sincerely,



Marc Rubenstein
Vice President and General Manager
Royal Star Hawaii Motorcoach Tours & Destination Services

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