



**For Immediate Release: February 9, 2016**

HTA Release (16-07)

**Statement by George D. Szigeti, President and CEO, Hawaii Tourism Authority**

**RE: HTA Informs Travelers About State of Emergency for Hawaii Island**

**HONOLULU** – George D. Szigeti, president and CEO of the Hawaii Tourism Authority, issued the following statement to inform travelers about the state of emergency declared by the County of Hawaii for Hawaii Island on February 8.

“Travelers should not be alarmed by the County of Hawaii’s state of emergency declaration for Hawaii Island or allow this decision to alter their travel plans to any of the Hawaiian Islands. This declaration is a good strategic move by the County of Hawaii, as it will provide government officials with additional funding and resources to eliminate dengue fever from Hawaii Island.

“As of today, 252 people on Hawaii Island have become ill by dengue fever over the past five months, of which 24 have been visitors. The rate of confirmed cases has been declining since January and, currently, only one case is considered infectious. Moreover, most of the dengue fever cases on Hawaii Island have been confined to the rural southwestern region. No locally acquired cases of dengue fever have been found on any other island of Hawaii.

“It’s important to note that no health organization has advised against traveling to the Hawaiian Islands at any time since the outbreak of dengue fever on Hawaii Island. Travelers should also take note that Hawaii Governor David Ige has chosen not to issue a statewide emergency proclamation since none of the conditions for doing so have been realized.”

**Background**

On February 8, Hawaii Island Mayor Billy Kenoi declared a state of emergency regarding dengue fever. The proclamation temporarily suspends a county ordinance so that Hawaii Island residents are now allowed to drop off used tires to county landfills for the next 60 days. Old tires collect and retain water and become prime breeding sites for mosquitoes. The proclamation can be seen online: <http://records.co.hawaii.hi.us/Weblink8/DocView.aspx?dbid=1&id=76622>

Hawaii Governor David Ige has not declared a state of emergency. The state has been working with the County to break the cycle of dengue fever infection and transmission on Hawaii Island. Additional state funding has been released in support of these efforts. Governor Ige stated he supports the efforts being taken on Hawaii Island, but will not issue a statewide emergency declaration unless specific conditions are realized, such as the outbreak spreading to other islands.

According to the Hawaii State Department of Health (DOH), 252 confirmed cases of dengue fever on Hawaii Island have been reported to date, of which only one is infectious. DOH has stated that Hawaii Island and the rest of Hawaii remain safe destinations for visitors and residents.

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DOH is encouraging residents and travelers to visit its website for the most up-to-date information about the situation and how to prevent mosquito bites: <http://health.hawaii.gov/docd/dengue-outbreak-2015/>

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority, Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau Central and Big Island Visitors Bureau offices continue to work with Hawai'i County Civil Defense and Department of Health to share accurate and timely information.

### **About HTA**

The [Hawai'i Tourism Authority](#) (HTA) is responsible for strategically managing the State of Hawai'i's marketing initiatives to support tourism. HTA's goal is to optimize tourism's benefits for Hawai'i, while being attentive to the interests of travelers, the community and visitor industry. Established in 1998 to support Hawai'i's leading industry and largest employer, HTA continually strives to help ensure the sustainability of tourism's success.

For more information about HTA, please visit [www.hawaii-tourism-authority.org](http://www.hawaii-tourism-authority.org). Follow updates about HTA on Facebook, Twitter (@HawaiiHTA) and its YouTube Channel.

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