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**David Y. Ige**  
Governor

**George D. Szigeti**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

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HTA Release (16-65)

## **Statement by George D. Szigeti, President and CEO, Hawai'i Tourism Authority**

### **RE: New Customs Facility in Kona Opens the Skies to International Flights**

**HONOLULU** – George D. Szigeti, president and CEO of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), issued the following statement in response to today's announcement that a new Federal Inspection Service facility is opening at Kona International Airport at Keahole on the island of Hawai'i to welcome passengers of international flights.

"The convenience of having a new customs facility in Kona is a huge achievement for our tourism industry and makes Hawai'i a more attractive destination to international travelers as we enter 2017. Hawai'i's success hinges on air access meeting demand and the more route options our state can offer airlines serving international customers, the more it strengthens our tourism industry for the long term.

"Destinations worldwide are working hard to entice global travelers and Hawai'i needs every advantage to stay competitive. This new customs facility and the capability it provides for airlines to fly directly to Kona from any international gateway city enhances Hawai'i's appeal as a travel destination.

"We are grateful to Governor David Ige for leading the charge on this initiative to establish a second customs facility in the Hawaiian Islands. His personal commitment, especially in Washington, D.C., is a major factor behind the opening of this facility and the benefits that international flights will bring to the island of Hawai'i. Our thanks also go to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Department of Transportation and the State Department of Transportation for their collaboration and support.

"In three weeks, Hawaiian Airlines will launch nonstop service between Kona and Haneda Airport in Tokyo. We applaud Hawaiian's continued investment in the Japan travel market and see this route providing a tremendous economic boost to the state. Hawaiian's Haneda-Kona service will give travelers from Japan a new incentive to come explore the beauty and wonders of Hawai'i."

#### **About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority**

The [Hawai'i Tourism Authority](http://hawaiiitourismauthority.org) 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.hawaiiitourismauthority.org](http://www.hawaiiitourismauthority.org). Follow updates about HTA on Facebook, Twitter (@HawaiiHTA) and its YouTube Channel.

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