



Hawai'i Convention Center  
1801 Kalākāua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815  
**kelepona** tel 808 973 2255  
**kelepa'i** fax 808 973 2253  
**kahua pa'a** web [hawaiiitourismauthority.org](http://hawaiiitourismauthority.org)

**David Y. Ige**  
*Governor*

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

## **HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

January 2, 2018

Aloha and Happy New Year!

Hawai'i's tourism industry looks ahead to 2018 with hope.

The full-year visitor statistics for 2017– and the economic impact statewide – will be released at the end of this month. But we already know that new yearly records will be set in three key categories: generated state tax revenue, visitor spending and visitor arrivals.

Generated state tax revenue supports government programs all communities need. Visitor spending grows the state's economy. Visitor arrivals spread tourism's impact to all islands.

Most importantly, tourism's success is supporting approximately 200,000 jobs statewide for residents who depend on Hawai'i's number one industry for their livelihoods.

The industry's success is a collaborative team effort supported by tourism's stakeholders, from our elected officials and leaders in the private sector to the professionals on the front line interacting with visitors daily.

All stakeholders are committed to seeing tourism prosper for the good of residents, families, businesses and communities statewide.

### **AIR SEAT CAPACITY INCREASING IN 2018**

We have good reason to believe tourism's momentum can be sustained in 2018. Over the last half of 2017, we saw a steady rise in air seat capacity to Hawai'i.

In November, air seat capacity increased by 5 percent compared to a year ago, the highest monthly rate of growth in 2017. We expect air seat capacity in December to show an increase of about 6 percent when the month's visitor statistics are released.

This upward trend is continuing into 2018 in response to travel demand. In the first quarter, based on scheduled flights serving Hawai'i, air seat capacity is projected to grow by 10.9 percent!

Travel demand for Hawai'i drives air seat capacity, which produces more bookings for hotels, activities and attractions, and increases spending at restaurants, retail outlets and stores. All of this combines to strengthen Hawai'i's economy and, ultimately, support jobs for residents.

Air seat capacity is, arguably, the strongest statistical indicator of potential success for Hawai'i tourism. That being the case, Hawai'i is well-positioned entering 2018.

Yet, we all know tourism is a fragile industry and continued growth can be interrupted at any time by an economic downturn, international crisis or natural disaster.

Moreover, destinations worldwide are relentless in trying to draw travelers away from Hawai'i.

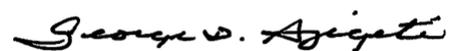
Thus, we can never assume strong travel demand for Hawai'i is a given. We have to constantly market the Hawaiian Islands to help ensure travelers keep booking trips to Hawai'i and driving travel demand.

As travel demand stays strong for Hawai'i, so does air seat capacity and our state's economy.

Everyone can count on HTA and its Global Marketing Team to continually work at driving travel demand for the Hawaiian Islands.

Mahalo for your continued support, and best wishes for a happy and prosperous 2018.

With Warmest Aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George D. Szigeti". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "G".

George D. Szigeti  
President and CEO