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

RE: Initial Travel Demand for Hawai'i Unaffected by False Missile Alert

HONOLULU – George D. Szigeti, president and CEO of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), provided the following update on HTA's monitoring of travel demand for the Hawaiian Islands after a false alert of an inbound missile to Hawai'i was mistakenly issued on January 13 by the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency.

"Thankfully, we have seen little to no impact in travel demand for the Hawaiian Islands in these first few days following the false alert of an inbound missile threat to Hawai'i that was mistakenly issued by the Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency.

"We are monitoring this situation closely and maintaining continuous contact with our tourism marketing partners in 10 global travel markets. Thus far, just a small number of concerns have been reported by travelers or travel trade professionals in these markets about coming to Hawai'i.

"Additionally, only a handful of inquiries regarding the false alert have been made as of today to the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau's call center that takes calls and e-mails from people throughout the U.S. mainland interested in travel to Hawai'i.

"We are also in contact with the visitor industry locally about potential impacts to their businesses. Industry partners are understandably angry about the false alert, but none have reported to HTA an undue number of cancellations since it was issued.

"We already have in place a strategic marketing program to elevate Hawai'i's brand and help drive travel demand for the Hawaiian Islands in each of our 10 global markets. Our marketing efforts to promote travel to Hawai'i will continue unabated. If we see an increase in trip cancellations or a decline in future bookings due to the false alert, we will immediately assess and take the necessary actions to help reverse such a trend from continuing.

"Tourism can be a fragile industry and the confidence of travelers in booking trips can be shaken by an incident like this. Fortunately, in these first few days, the impact on travel to Hawai'i appears to be minimal, if at all. Hopefully, that will continue to be the case but we won't know for certain for several more weeks until we can monitor trends in airline and hotel bookings and gauge the sentiments of travelers. We will be doing this knowing how vital the tourism industry is to supporting jobs and the economic well-being of families and communities statewide.

"Our message to travelers continues to be that there is no cause to cancel trips already booked to Hawai'i or to look elsewhere for a vacation because of this false alert. Hawai'i is and continues to be a safe, secure and welcoming destination to all visitors from around the world."

About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

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

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