

July 14, 2020

Aloha Governor Ige and State of Hawai'i Distinguished Leaders,

I am representing an organization called HALE Hawaii that was created very recently with the goal of helping our leaders protect Hawaii from COVID-19. We want to thank all of you and particularly Governor Ige for extending the re-opening for at least one more month. The August 1 timing for re-opening (waiving quarantine) was particularly bad for the following reasons:

1. School starts August 4, and having both of these major changes at the same time could have very easily overwhelmed the state with positive cases. Schools are trying to focus on trying to open safely, but a safe environment in an area with a small amount of cases looks very different than one heavy with cases.
2. Hawai'i's cases have spiked significantly.
3. Most mainland states are suffering huge spikes in cases, hospitalizations and deaths, with some states shutting many of their businesses down.
4. Availability and accessibility of testing has decreased even more, due to test kits being diverted to states with spikes.

We are grateful that the date for the re-opening has been moved and would like to request that a new date not be set, but rather that benchmarks for safety be set out. Once the benchmarks are achieved, a date for re-opening can be scheduled. In this way, the re-opening date will not be such a moving target, and people will understand that the rationale for re-opening is not something that is in your control.

The safety benchmarks that we recommend are that:

1. States, particularly the states that we see most travel from, flatten the curve before allowing them to skip quarantine, even with testing.
2. Hawai'i's cases must be flattened and in control.
3. Accurate testing will be available for travelers and for returning residents as well.
 - a. A two-step testing process be required before waiving quarantine. The travel process is where many will become infected, so testing prior to their flight will only be marginally effective.

Something else that we would like to see is an effective quarantine for people who do choose to come to visit in August and until we are re-opened. We have read many posts from people stating that they will come here anyway and will take their chances on not being caught for ignoring quarantine. This puts our residents in even more danger. We ask that a law enforcement task force with special training be designated to enforce quarantine and mask usage. As it is, residents are calling in and there is very little enforcement of quarantine. I tried to report a food truck not using masks just this morning and was re-directed six times to different numbers.

We suggest that there be specific quarantine locations on each island and that visitors be transported directly there, without being able to rent a car until after quarantine. We also ask that businesses be supported more with the enforcement of masks, and that fines to individuals be enforced as a deterrent

to not wearing a mask, particularly when indoors in a public place or employees in a food serving establishment.

Keeping Hawai'i safe will help our economy in the long-run, as others will see us as a safe place to be. We are more likely to have long-term tourism if we can successfully prevent the spread of the virus. We believe that long-term tourism (3-6 months) is a better solution to get us through this time. Hawai'i leadership has an opportunity right now to demonstrate a vision for a healthy society that every citizen of this country badly needs and deserves. We are asking you to protect the health of our keiki, kupuna, community and economy by modeling protective plans of other countries who have proven that this can be done.

Sincerely,

Kai Duponte

Kai Duponte, MSW
HALE Hawai'i