



September 16, 2020

Dear Union Leader:

Aloha from HALE Hawai'i. We are writing to introduce ourselves, and to offer our support to the members of your union in their struggle for safe working conditions during the pandemic. We believe that unions are uniquely situated to protect the interests not only of their members, but also of the community as a whole, and we would like to join forces with you in that effort. We want to get workers back to work, and reopen our schools as well as our economy, but we want to make sure that our community's health and safety are protected to the greatest possible extent in the process. Today's announcement that quarantine-free trans-Pacific travel will resume on October 15 makes it even more urgent that we take *immediate* action to protect our community.

HALE Hawai'i is a statewide, grassroots community organization formed in response to the pandemic. Our goal, as explained on our website ([www.HALEHawaii.cc](http://www.HALEHawaii.cc)), is to help the people of Hawai'i envision a goal of a COVID-19-free home where we can all live our best lives without fear of COVID-19. Over the course of the last six months, we have sponsored numerous petitions, demonstrations, letters, and phone calls urging our elected state and county officials to do a better job of protecting the health of Hawai'i residents.

Despite these efforts, our government has now capitulated to visitor industry pressure to open our state to quarantine-free trans-Pacific travel. This creates a grave health and safety risk to workers in the visitor and transportation industries. Even worse, the government is pushing to reopen in-person school at the same time, threatening the health of our teachers, keiki, and families. We need to push back against that pressure hard, and soon, if we are to be successful in combatting those threats. We would like to join forces with your membership so that we can support one another's voices and mount an *effective* opposition to an unsafe, premature reopening.

We believe that neither the single predeparture test protocol (now slated to become effective October 15) nor the "resort bubble" model are adequate to keep new sources of infection from entering our communities. A single predeparture test will miss some infections due to false negatives, or exposure too recent to have resulted in a detectable viral load. Moreover, travelers may contract the virus between their test date and their arrival in the state. The "resort bubble" concept will expose resort workers and visitors who have completed their quarantine period to potential infection from new arrivals, which can then spread from the "bubble" into the community. Meanwhile, our testing and contact tracing capacity remains woefully inadequate to detect and contain new case clusters introduced through travel.

We believe that the Kauai Plan (<https://halehawaii.cc/kauai-plan>), which was put forward by a group of doctors in June, offers the best hope for a safe reopening. We also



support the state's adoption of either the Yale<sup>1</sup> or Oceanit<sup>2</sup> saliva tests, as well as the Perseus contact tracing app<sup>3</sup> recently approved by the Maui County Council. Using both the saliva test and the app together, coupled with the protocol suggested by the Kauai plan, we could reopen both the travel industry and our schools without an undue risk of widespread infection.

We would welcome your membership's participation in the effort to promote this alternative. We stand ready to support you in any action you want to take in that regard, from union resolutions to lobbying efforts, demonstrations, direct actions, and if necessary, strikes. Please let us know what you believe would be the best next step to initiate this collaboration. We need to act **soon**; October 15 will be here before we know it.

In solidarity,

Sarah Hofstadter  
for HALE Hawaii

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.yale.edu/2020/08/15/yales-rapid-covid-19-saliva-test-receives-fda-emergency-use-authorization>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.staradvertiser.com/2020/08/03/hawaii-news/local-covid-19-saliva-test-could-help-turn-pandemics-tide-doctors-say/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.maui-news.com/news/local-news/2020/09/oahu-based-contact-tracing-phone-app-waiting-to-launch/>