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**ISLAND OF HAWAII VISITORS BUREAU AND HAWAII COUNTY
ANNOUNCE PONO PLEDGE**

*New public information campaign aims to educate residents and visitors
on being responsible while on the island of Hawaii*

Island of Hawaii (September 20, 2018) – The Island of Hawaii Visitors Bureau (IHVB) and County of Hawaii have partnered to launch the “Pono Pledge,” a new public information campaign aimed at educating and encouraging residents and visitors to be safe, responsible and respectful to each other and the environment while enjoying the bounty of the island of Hawaii.

Through funding from the County of Hawaii’s Research and Development Department’s Tourism Marketing Program, the Pono Pledge initiative hopes to build awareness to help protect and preserve the island’s natural resources and wildlife.

“The island of Hawaii is one of the most geographically diverse and awe-inspiring places on the planet, and it is our *kuleana* (responsibility) as an island community to encourage *pono* practices so that it remains that way for future generations,” said Ross Birch, IHVB executive director. “By committing to this pledge, residents and visitors are acknowledging their responsibility to have respect for place -- no matter where you are.”

IHVB and the County of Hawaii are looking to make an immediate impact with the launch of the Pono Pledge by educating residents and visitors on important topics, such as enjoying the island safely, respecting wildlife, observing no trespassing signs, properly preparing for weather and ocean conditions, and being mindful about protecting the island’s fragile environment.

The Pono Pledge reads as follows:

I pledge to be *pono* (righteous) on the island of Hawaii.
I will mindfully seek wonder, but not wander where I do not belong.
I will not defy death for breathtaking photos, or venture beyond safety.
I will *mālama* (care for) land and sea, and admire wildlife only from afar.
Molten lava will mesmerize me, but I will not disrupt its flow.
I will not take what is not mine, leaving lava rocks and sand as originally found.
I will heed ocean conditions, never turning my back to the Pacific.
When rain falls *ma uka* (inland), I will remain high above ground, out of rivers and streams.
I will embrace the island’s aloha spirit, as it embraces me.

Lawe i ka ma’alea i kū’ono’ono.
“Take wisdom and make it deep.”

-more-

The goal is to have 10,000 residents and visitors commit to and sign the Pono Pledge on a newly created website – PonoPledge.com – over the course of the campaign's first year. Those who oblige will then be encouraged to spread word of the pledge to others via word-of-mouth and via their social channels.

"We in Hawai'i County are happy to partner with Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau on this initiative," said Mayor Harry Kim. "We believe it helps make our Island a nicer place to live, work, play and visit for everyone."

PonoPledge.com will also serve as a resource to the public. The website includes general safety information pertaining to various warnings, watches, advisories and outlook signs people may encounter. Full lists of lifeguarded beaches, endangered species and their protections, ocean warning flags, rules of the road, earthquake information, volcano updates, and emergency numbers are also available online.

To engage the Hawai'i Island community, IHVB is coordinating a "Live Pono" community service day on Saturday, September 22. Select businesses and nonprofits will be hosting volunteer activities at various locations on the island. For additional information and to sign up, visit www.Facebook.com/IslandofHawaii.

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About Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau

The Island of Hawai'i Visitors Bureau is an Island Chapter of the Hawai'i Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB). HVCB manages Hawai'i Tourism United States (HTUSA), which is contracted by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA), for marketing management services in the continental U.S. The HTA, the state of Hawai'i's tourism agency, was established in 1998 to ensure a successful visitor industry well into the future. Its mission is to strategically manage Hawai'i tourism in a sustainable manner consistent with the state of Hawai'i's economic goals, cultural values, preservation of natural resources, community desires, and visitor industry needs. For more information about the island of Hawai'i, visit GoHawaii.com/Island-of-Hawaii.

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