

BACKGROUND

The great increase in the number of cruise ships visiting Maui between the mid-nineties when the first cruise ship arrived in Lahaina Harbor to 2003 when over 230,000 cruise visitors arrived on Maui prompted Mayor Alan Arakawa to appoint a Task Force of community members to assess the impacts and benefits of cruise ships on the island Maui.¹

The Task Force included of a broad spectrum of Maui residents drawn from County and State government, large and small business, tourism, small towns and culture, environmental organizations, the visitor industry, law enforcement and economic development. Task Force members are listed in Appendix A. The only funding appropriated for the activities of the Task Force were funds paid to a consultant to assist with research, writing and Task Force coordination.

The Task Force held 41 meetings between November 7, 2003 and August 4, 2005 to interview resources, discuss data, statistics and other information, and draft the report, including the findings and recommendations. It also held two community meetings to present a brief summary of its interim findings and solicit comments and input from the public. One meeting was held at Lahaina Intermediate School on November 9, 2004 and one was held at Maui Waena (in Kahului) on November 16, 2004.

The work of this Task Force was not undertaken as a technical study. Rather the process was designed to be a broad informal survey and assessment from a community perspective of the cruise industry in Maui.

The members of the Task Force, who are all residents of Maui, felt it was imperative to understand this new sector to Maui from multiple angles and therefore organized its approach and information gathering from several perspectives:

¹ Because the cruise ships currently only visit the island of Maui in Maui County, the Task Force limited its scope to the Maui experience. Some components of the Task Force work, however, may have value in future assessments conducted by Moloka'i or Lana'i of this possible sector in their economies.

Mayor's Cruise Ship Task Force Background

- Cultural
- Economic
- Environmental
- Infrastructural
- Political
- Security/Safety
- Social

The Task Force also drew on information from representatives of the Federal, State and County government, the local business community, workers in Lahaina and Kahului harbors, the cruise industry, recreational harbor users, local residents, etc. A complete listing of the Task Force resources is presented in Appendix B.

The approach taken by the Task Force reflected the core values of our community and the importance of evaluating dynamic influences or initiatives that impact the community in the context of all of these values.

The core values of the community derive from a history of long-range planning and visioning processes and studies conducted in the Maui County, some of which date back to the mid-eighties and others as recent as June 2005. These include Visions of the Future, Decisions Maui, Main Street Community Workshops, Conferences and Data Collection, the Community General Plan, and Focus Maui Nui. Through these and other processes our community values, priorities and recommendations have been reassessed and reaffirmed.

Norwegian Cruise Lines America (NCLA) is a new cruise line (a US subsidiary of Norwegian Cruise Lines, which is a subsidiary of a foreign corporation, Star Cruises) that has agreed to operate its business solely within the State of Hawai'i. This means all its ships are registered in the United States and must operate under US law. To do this, NCLA agreed to many conditions that other cruise lines are not subject to.

NCLA ships only sail within Hawai'i waters, where as all other cruise ships may only stay within State waters a short time, and must make a foreign port of call outside the US before and after each tour in Hawai'i.

NCLA is currently the largest cruise line operation in Hawai'i and by 2007 70% or more of the cruise passengers visiting Hawai'i and Maui are projected to be NCLA passengers. As a US-based business, NCLA also interacts with Federal and State government and local businesses very differently than do other cruise lines. Therefore, NCLA made a presentation to the Task Force, sent a representative to several Task Force meetings, and participated more extensively as a resource to the Task Force than did other cruise lines.

The Task Force also toured and was served lunch on board the *Pride of Aloha* on November 5, 2004. During this visit the Task Force met with the ship's captain, environmental officer, the "Hawaiian Ambassador," the ship's cultural programming staff and other members of the crew.

The Northwest Cruise Ship Association (NWCA) also made a presentation to the Task Force on behalf of all the major cruise lines that regularly stop in Hawai'i and Maui. Two shipping agencies that represent cruise lines based in other countries in Hawai'i (Waldron Steamship and Transmarine Navigation Corporation) also met with the Task Force and presented information about the MOU and the operations of the cruise lines they represent.

This report is offered as an informal introduction to the cruise ship industry on Maui and its broad implications for our community. As such, it is meant as a starting point for further study and discussion that will inform our decision making about the future of this industry on Maui.