

# MAUI CAUTIOUSLY REOPENS FOR TOURISM AFTER WILDFIRES



Travel restrictions on the Hawaiian island of Maui have been lifted, making entry to the island possible again. However, residents have expressed their concerns and started a petition against it, as many have been affected by unemployment and have lost their homes.

Despite these concerns, holidays are now possible again on the island's western side and will be gradually expanded, as reported. However, the coastal city of Lāhainā, almost entirely destroyed by fire, remains closed.

## **Failed petition against reopening for tourism**

On October 8, Hawaii Governor Josh Green lifted travel restrictions for a soft reopening. However, many locals were against it and had signed a petition against it. They felt that the reopening was done without proper consultation with the displaced workers' families who had lost their homes in the fires and were still staying in hotels and other accommodations. Almost 17,000 people signed the petition, but it did not stop the government from easing travel restrictions.

During the first phase of the soft reopening, hotels in the Kapalua to Kahana communities will be opened. This move is expected to help local businesses as schools and many shops remain closed, and thousands of people are unemployed. The success of the first phase will be evaluated to determine the initiation of the next phases. In addition, whether more southern districts can also reopen.

Tour operators are already taking reservations for resorts west of the island. They ask those interested to make reservations only from October 17, as government statements constantly change. Resorts include Kahana Villa, Sands of Kahana, The Gardens, Kahana Beach, and Hono Koa.

## **Gradual reopening of Maui**

During this year's summer, Hawaii was hit by severe forest fires that also affected the island of Maui. Although some hotels have recently reopened, this move has been met with opposition from many residents who have started a petition against it. The residents, who have already lost their homes and jobs due to the fires, are concerned about tourists' safety and the impact their arrival might have on the island.

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