



DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
Office of Consumer Protection
News Release

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**HAWAII PARTICIPATES IN MULTI-STATE, MULTI-NATIONAL CASE
AGAINST DECEPTIVE TRAVEL PROMOTERS**

HONOLULU – The Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) today announced that it joined in a multi-state, multi-national law enforcement initiative, coordinated by the Federal Trade Commission, to combat deceptive travel promoters.

OCP wants consumers to be alert to unscrupulous promoters tricking consumers into purchasing deeply discounted or "free" vacation packages or future travel-related products or services supposedly worth thousands of dollars. However, most consumers are required to attend lengthy high-pressure sales presentations and often receive nothing of value after paying thousands of dollars in fees.

Today's announcement coincides with the announcement of more than 80 civil enforcement actions by the FTC and 28 states; more than 58 criminal prosecutions brought by U.S. attorneys nationwide and local law enforcement agencies; and 24 enforcement actions by international law enforcement agencies in eight countries.

To protect themselves against deceptive travel offers, Bruce Kim, Executive Director of the Office of Consumer Protection, advises consumers look out for these warning signs:

- **You "won a free vacation," but you have to pay some fees first.**
- **The prize company wants your credit card number.**
- **They cold-call, cold-text, or email you out of the blue.** Before you do business with any company you do not know, call the Attorney General and local consumer protection agencies in the company's home state to check for complaints; then search online for consumer complaints.
- **They do not -- or cannot -- give you specifics.**
- **You get pressure to sign up for a travel club for great deals on future vacations.**

- **You get a robocall about it.** Robocalls from companies are illegal if you have not given a company written permission to call you, even if you have not signed up for the national [Do Not Call Registry](#).

"Before signing anything, check the company out with the BBB (<http://www.bbb.org/us/Consumer-Complaints/>) or the DCCA (<http://dcca.hawaii.gov/>) for consumer complaints against the company. You should ask to see the company's written cancellation policy and ask a lot of questions, including that they put all their promises in writing before you agree to anything," Kim said.

Consumers are also advised to consider making travel arrangements through licensed travel agents. They will provide more protection from scams, and they earn their commissions through the business that consumers patronize, not the individual consumer.

If anyone believes he or she has been a victim of deceptive sales practices, please contact the DCCA's Consumer Resource Center at 587-4272 and file a complaint.

Visit FTC.gov/travel to learn more about travel scams.

OCP is responsible for reviewing, investigating and prosecuting allegations of unfair or deceptive trade practices in consumer transactions. OCP has jurisdiction over a wide range of businesses and commercial activities.

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