



TOURISM STAKEHOLDERS RALLY AGAINST EXPECTED VISITOR VISA CHANGES

BALI, August 27, 2003—Casa Grande, Bali's association of star-rated hotels, supported tourism stakeholders at a peaceful rally on August 27 to request reconsideration of the timing of implementation for Presidential Decree 18/2003. This Decree, initiated by the Indonesian Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, changes the current Free Visa on Arrival facilities for visitors to Indonesia.

Members of the Bali government, tourism industry, airlines, non-governmental organizations, and the public turned out 5,000-strong for the rally. Meeting at Bajra Sandi Monument in Renon at 0900 hours, the rally proceeded peacefully to the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights office to present a letter requesting the proposed US\$35 fee for visa upon arrival to citizens of all but 11 nations (Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Macao, Chili, Morocco, Turkey and Peru) be postponed until the tourism industry has normalized.

If implementation cannot be postponed, the joint letter requested that the list of countries entitled to visa free facilities be expanded to include Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, France, Switzerland, the UK, Italy, the Netherlands and the United States. Implementation of the Decree is rumored to set for October 1, 2003.

"Members have expressed their concern for the economic well being of the Balinese people. Although there are recent positive signs of recovery since the October 2002 bombings, which virtually halted the island's leading industry," said Casa Grande Chairman Robert Kelsall, "this is not the right time to add further obstacles to Indonesian tourism. Objections are still being experienced for travel to Indonesia, following recent acts of terrorism and more specific travel advisories relating to the safety of foreigners."

Casa Grande members sent about 1,600 representatives to the rally, with banners and placards including hotel or Casa Grande logos. The rally aimed to draw the masses to indicate how many people will be affected by further downturn in tourism.

Other associations supporting this initiative included Bali chapters of the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, Tour Guides Association, Indonesian Hotel and Restaurant Association, Association of Indonesian Travel Agents, Society of Professional Conference Organizers; Airlines Association, and the Kuta Executive Club, South Kuta Beach Business Association, Kuta Small Business Association, Water Sports Association, Skal International Indonesia, Bali Tourism Authority, Bali Tourism Board, Badung Government, Bali Government, other regency government offices, Udayana University and hotel schools.

*Casa Grande is a professional association of star-rated hotels and resorts in Bali.
Members include general managers from more than 50 hotels and resorts,
representing more than 11,500 hotel rooms and 17,000 employees in the Bali hotel sector.*

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