



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
DIRECTOR

**DANE K. WICKER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY**

Friday, February 7, 2025  
10:00 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of  
**HB 1407**

**RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
AND TOURISM.**

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee:

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent of HB 1407, which seeks to foster entrepreneurship, support small business growth and promote technology commercialization within the state of Hawai'i.

DBEDT recognizes the intent of HB 1407 and appreciates the Legislature's focus on economic diversification and innovation. We would like to highlight that the state, through the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC), currently administers several programs that align with the goals outlined in this bill. These programs actively support the growth of Hawai'i's innovation economy and provide resources to entrepreneurs and small businesses across various industries.

**Accelerator Small Business Technology (SBT) Program**

HTDC's Accelerator SBT Program supports Hawaii-based accelerators that nurture early-stage technology and innovation startups. These accelerators provide mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to capital, enabling local entrepreneurs to scale their businesses and contribute to Hawai'i's economic growth.

This program directly aligns with HB 1407’s objectives of fostering entrepreneurship and business development.

<b>FY24 Accelerator - \$2,000,000</b>	
# of SBT Applications Received	<b>13</b>
Number of First-Time applicants	3
# of SBT Awards Funded	<b>9</b>
<b>IMPACTS</b>	
# of Retained and New Jobs Created	900+
Est Total Revenue Reported from Companies Assisted	\$70MM+

<b>FY25 Accelerator &amp; SBT- \$1,000,000</b>	
# of SBT Applications Received	<b>15</b>
Number of First-Time applicants	7
# of SBT Awards Funded	TBD
Total Funding Amount Requested	\$2.6MM
<b>IMPACTS</b>	
# of Retained and New Jobs Created	TBD
Est Total Revenue Reported from Companies Assisted	TBD
# of Potential Small Business Trained	201

*\*\* FY25 Application review process is still on-going*

*\*\* FY25 Priority given to applications supporting AgTech, Dual-Use, CPG, HTDC Programs, Addition Funding, Neighbor Islands, new programs, new applicants*

**Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Matching Grant Program**

HTDC provides matching funds to Hawai'i-based small businesses that receive federal SBIR/STTR grants. These grants help companies bridge funding gaps, advance their research and development efforts, and bring innovative technologies to market. This program supports technology-driven economic growth, a key focus of HB 1407.

<b>FY24 HSBIR - \$2,000,000</b>	
# of Applications Received	<b>20</b>
Number of First-Time applicants	1
# of SBT Awards Funded	<b>17</b>
Total Amount of Federal Funds Awarded	\$24MM+
Total Amount of Matching Grant Requested	\$7.8MM+
<b>IMPACTS</b>	
# New Jobs Created	208
# of Retained Jobs	319
New Jobs Earning >\$80K	175

*\*\* FY25 awards review currently still in-progress.*

*\*\*FY25 priorities include Biosecurity, AgTech, Renewable energy, Dual-use Defense, Hawai'i problem areas*

**INNOVATE Hawai'i**

INNOVATE Hawai'i, a part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP), supports small and medium-sized manufacturers. The program offers technical assistance, workforce development, and business consulting to improve competitiveness and productivity, aligning with HB1407's emphasis on economic diversification and local business support.

<b>FY24 Manufacturing Assistance Program - \$2,000,000</b>	
# of SBT Applications Received	<b>69</b>
Number of First-Time applicants	45
# of MAP Awards Funded	<b>62</b>
Total Amount of Company investment	\$95MM+
Total Amount of Grant Request	\$2.9MM
<b>IMPACTS</b>	
# of New Jobs Created	466
# of New Part Time Jobs Created	429
# of Jobs Saved	978

*\*\* FY25 MEP Award priorities are tech implantation, automation/robotics*

### **Neighbor Island Innovation Initiative (NI3)**

The NI3 program provides business and technical assistance to small businesses on Hawaii's neighbor islands, focusing on technology adoption and operational improvements. This initiative aligns with HB 1407's goals of promoting equitable economic development across the state.

NOTE: The last year the **Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC)** supported the **Neighbor Island Innovation Initiative (NI3)** program was 2018. The NI3 program was closed due to federal funding constraints (USDA Rural Development Grant).

- 86 companies mentored on Kaua'i and Hawai'i Island
- 29 new HTDC clients

### **Hawai'i Center for Advanced Transportation Technologies (HCATT)**

HCATT facilitates the development of advanced transportation technologies, including hydrogen and renewable energy systems. This program contributes to sustainability and technology commercialization, supporting HB 1407's objectives of fostering innovation in clean energy and transportation sectors.

- The Pacific Energy Assurance Renewables Laboratory (PEARL) microgrid, an energy demonstration project with the Hawai'i Air National Guard is 100% federally funded. To date, the project has expended \$14.1M in the state in development and construction of the microgrid.

### **Dual-Use Technology Development Accelerator (DUTDA) Program**

HTDC's DUTDA Program supports companies developing technologies with both commercial and military applications. By helping businesses access federal funding and fostering partnerships with the Department of Defense, this program promotes innovation and aligns with HB 1407's focus on leveraging federal partnerships for economic growth.

- Innovate Hawai'i has leveraged funding from the National Institute of Standards and Technology Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST MEP) program to increase our collaboration with local Hawai'i machine shops to promote

advanced manufacturing technology workforce training that will support defense readiness for the state of Hawai'i.

**Recommendation:**

DBEDT appreciates the intent of HB 1407 and acknowledges the importance of fostering a robust innovation ecosystem in Hawai'i. We respectfully recommend that the bill be amended to increase resources and funding to these existing HTDC programs to further accomplish the bill's objectives. By enhancing the capacity of these programs, we can amplify their impact and ensure broader support for Hawai'i's entrepreneurs, small businesses and technology innovators.

DBEDT submits these comments, supporting the intent, in recognition of the effective programs already in place that align with HB 1407's goals. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with the Legislature to strengthen Hawai'i's innovation economy and support the growth of our local businesses.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



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#### **Executive Officers**

**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Chair*  
**Kit Okimoto**, Okimoto Corp., *Vice Chair*  
**Jayson Watts**, Mahi Pono, *Secretary/Treasurer*  
**Lauren Zirbel**, HFIA, *Executive Director*  
**Paul Kosasa**, ABC Stores, *Advisor*  
**Derek Kurisu**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Toby Taniguchi**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Joe Carter**, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Economic Development and Technology

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 7, 2025

TIME: 10am

RE: HB1407 Relating to the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure. As the measure notes there is a great need to support our local businesses and entrepreneurs so that they can grow and diversify our economy. A partnership between the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism and chambers of commerce is a logical way to leverage the economic power of the state and the expertise of the chambers to achieve maximum benefit for Hawaii entrepreneurs. We encourage the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.

January 31, 2025

House of Representatives  
Hawaii State Capitol  
415 South Bertania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Honorable Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair  
Committee on Economic Development & Technology  
Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair & Members

Dear Chair Ilagan and Members,  
**RE: HB1407**

**Aloha and Mabuhay!** My name is Randall Francisco. I am writing in support of the intent to establish grant funds to support of Chambers of Commerce in Hawaii. This thoughtful intention/legislation also recognizes the important contributions of chambers in Hawaii, especially, led by Hawaii's oldest chamber, Chamber of Commerce Hawaii (Chamber) who will celebrate its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary and having the distinction of not only being the oldest chamber West but, also, having garnered the number one chamber among its peers in the US. The innovation, quick-to-respond, combined strength of the membership and successful programs established and administered by the Chamber demonstrates the great difference a chamber can make in positively contributing to local county and statewide efforts.

Chambers are indeed great partners who are highly connected to each other and their communities who also help to bridge and leverage their resources in order to create a positive and thriving economy. The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii has demonstrated especially during Covid that it is adept, innovative, and has the capacity to bring together partners from public, private and non-government organizations to help address pressing needs. Whether supporting businesses in both good and difficult times, conducting research to help formulate policies, partner with health organizations, chambers have a track record of success in helping to improve people's livelihoods. Furthermore, the Chamber through its internal resources (membership, fundraising, sponsorships, etc.) and, with additional funds derived from grants, can do even more. Chambers have demonstrated that as leaders that they have the capacity to not only manage grants but, also, leverage resources to do even more.

On the island of Kauai, in addition to the Kauai Chamber of Commerce, the small ethnic chambers including the Kauai Filipino Chamber of Commerce and Kauai Native-Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce collectively are able to leverage limited resources, partner and support each other and further collaborate with counterparts across the state. This is especially true when Hawaii is showcased at the annual Hawaii On the Hill in Washington D.C. The Kauai Chamber's 112 years demonstrates its long-term capacity, history and success to organize, manage and deliver programs not only for business but, also, for the larger community of Kauai such as during the floods in 2018 as well as small towns such as Hanapepe whose strength is in manufacturing in Hanapepe Made/Kauai Made products such as the iconic Kauai Kookie.



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17<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Honolulu, HI 96815

808-521-9500  
NFIB.com

February 1, 2025

TO: Rep. Greggor Iligan, Chair  
Rep. Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair  
Members of the Economic Development  
and Technology

FR: Michael Iosua, State Director  
NFIB, Hawaii Chapter

RE: **SUPPORT** OF HB 1407 – RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Hearing date: February 7, 2025, at 10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Iligan. Vice Chair Hussey and members of the committee,

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of NFIB's Hawaii Chapter in **SUPPORT** of HB 1407 – RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM. NFIB is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, and member-driven organization exclusively dedicated to small and independent businesses. With members in all four counties, NFIB's Hawaii chapter advocates on issues that affect Hawaii's small and independent business owners.

HB 1407 establishes a chamber of commerce grant program to support entrepreneurship and business innovation throughout the State of Hawaii. Hawaii's economy thrives on the strength of its small businesses, which serve as the backbone of our communities, generating jobs, fostering innovation, and driving economic prosperity. However, many aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners face significant challenges in accessing the mentorship, training, and resources needed to succeed. By leveraging the expertise and expansive networks of local chambers of commerce, this bill provides a strategic and effective approach to empowering entrepreneurs statewide.

The proposed grant program will provide targeted support for entrepreneurs through mentoring, workshops, and skill-building initiatives. Supporting this bill is an investment in Hawaii's future—one that empowers local businesses, strengthens our economy, and promotes innovation. I respectfully urge this committee to pass HB 1407 and provide much-needed resources to the entrepreneurs who drive our state forward.

Mahalo for your consideration.

**HB-1407**

Submitted on: 2/3/2025 8:47:55 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Kurohara	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HB1407 which establishes a chamber of commerce grant program through DBEDT.



# Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

1321 Kino'ole Street - Hilo, Hawai'i 96720

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## **Executive Officer**

Carla Kuo

**2024-2025**

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James Staub

Jase Takeya

Nimr Tamimi

Irene Yamanaka

Tracie Yoshimoto

## TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

HB 1407 - Relating to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism – IN SUPPORT

Friday, February 7, 2025 10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Greggor Ilagan, Vice Chair Ikaika Hussey, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Carla Kuo, and I am the Executive Officer of the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce, a 501(c)(6) business non-profit representing over 300 businesses and individual members, primarily on the East side of Hawai'i Island. I am writing to express the Chamber's strong **support for HB 1407**, which requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish a Chamber of Commerce Grant Program.

This grant program will have a significant positive impact on the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce and similar organizations across the state. By providing critical funding, it will enhance our ability to support local businesses through professional development opportunities, networking events, and advocacy efforts that strengthen the business community. For the Chamber, these funds will allow us to expand our programs, increase resources for our members, and drive initiatives that promote economic growth and sustainability on Hawai'i Island. Ultimately, this support will not only benefit our member businesses but also contribute to the broader economic vitality and resilience of our local communities.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify on behalf of the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce.

Sincerely,

Carla Kuo  
Executive Officer  
Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

**COUNTY COUNCIL**

Mel Rapozo, Chair  
KipuKai Kualii, Vice Chair  
Addison Bulosan  
Bernard P. Carvalho, Jr.  
Felicia Cowden  
Fern Holland  
Arryl Kaneshiro



**OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK**

Jade K. Fountain-Tanigawa, County Clerk  
Lyndon M. Yoshioka, Deputy County Clerk

Telephone: (808) 241-4188  
Facsimile: (808) 241-6349  
Email: cokcouncil@kauai.gov

**Council Services Division**  
4396 Rice Street, Suite 209  
Lihu'e, Kaua'i, Hawai'i 96766

February 5, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF ADDISON BULOSAN  
COUNCILMEMBER, KAUAI COUNTY COUNCIL  
ON**

**HB 1407, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

House Committee on Economic Development & Technology

Friday, February 7, 2025

10:00 a.m.

Conference Room 423

Via Videoconference

Dear Chair Ilagan and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in SUPPORT of HB 1407, Relating to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. My testimony is submitted in my individual capacity as a member of the Kaua'i County Council.

I wholeheartedly support the intent of HB 1407, which would greatly affect the Kaua'i community.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 1407. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Council Services Staff at (808) 241-4188 or via email to cokcouncil@kauai.gov.

Sincerely,

**ADDISON BULOSAN**  
Councilmember, Kaua'i County Council

AAO:mn

**Testimony to the House Committee on Economic Development & Technology (ECD)**

**Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair  
Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair**

**Friday, February 7, 2025, at 10:00AM  
Conference Room 423 & Videoconference**

**RE: HB1407 Relating to Government Procedures**

Aloha e Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 1407 (HB1407), which requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish a Chamber of Commerce Grant Program.

HB1407 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Business Services. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

A strong entrepreneurial ecosystem is essential for Hawaii's long-term economic growth, yet many small businesses struggle with limited resources and support. This bill establishes a Chamber of Commerce Grant Program under the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to drive business innovation by funding chambers of commerce that serve at least 300 businesses. Grants of up to \$100,000 will support mentoring, workshops, and skill development for entrepreneurs, while also addressing critical needs like staffing, technical assistance, and technology upgrades to enhance business support services.

By strengthening chambers of commerce, this initiative directly benefits small businesses, fostering a more resilient and innovative economy. Requiring measurable outcomes ensures accountability in job creation, new business formation, and essential skill development. Investing in entrepreneurship fuels economic stability, innovation, and competitiveness. The Chamber supports this bill as a key initiative to empower small businesses and drive Hawaii's economic growth.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 1407. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-1407**

Submitted on: 2/5/2025 11:41:14 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Douglass Adams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in STRONG support of HB1407, which requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish a Chamber of Commerce Grant Program. Diversification and revitalization of our state's economy requires the support of all stakeholders associated with business and workforce development, especially the chambers of commerce and their memberships. This grant program is an innovative way to develop new ideas for sustainable entrepreneurial enterprises.

I strongly encourage the Committee to support HB1407 and pass it to the Committee on Finance with a favorable recommendation.

respectfully,

Douglass S. Adams

**HB-1407**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 12:07:08 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jordan Odo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee,

I submit this testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 1407, which establishes a chamber of commerce grant program to develop and cultivate entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship is highly beneficial for our state. Having an entrepreneurial economy would drive economic growth by creating jobs, spurring innovation and technological development, increasing tax revenue, promoting social change, and decreasing our reliance on imports.

I believe our local chambers of commerce would be -- and already are -- excellent partners in creating an entrepreneurial economy in Hawaii. I have observed firsthand the great work of our local chambers of commerce. Their employees are committed to support our local businesses and work to diversify our economy and strengthen our communities. They offer, among other things, (a) training for business, skill, and professional development, (b) forums for business owners and leaders to collaborate on new ventures, (c) mentorship, and (d) important resources and services for local businesses. Some chambers of commerce also have business and entrepreneurship programs in schools and small business accelerator programs.

A grant program would greatly assist our local chambers of commerce as they employ the resources needed to help entrepreneurs develop and thrive.

Thank you for allowing me to submit my testimony.

Jordan Odo



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February 7, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY

**TESTIMONY ON HB 1407**  
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
AND TOURISM

Conference Room 423 & Videoconference  
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice-Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports HB 1407**, which requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish a Chamber of Commerce Grant Program. This program can provide much-needed resources to strengthen Hawai'i's business community, including agricultural enterprises and value-added food producers.

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawai'i, Island Chambers, and other Chambers support agricultural businesses across the state. These organizations provide critical services such as business development support, networking opportunities, and advocacy for policies that strengthen local industries. For agriculture, chambers of commerce play an essential role in helping farmers, ranchers, and value-added food producers navigate regulatory processes, expand market access, and secure financial resources to grow their businesses.

Entrepreneurs are essential to the future of Hawai'i's agricultural sector. Small and mid-sized agricultural businesses drive local food production, create jobs, and contribute to the state's economy. In addition to growing crops and raising livestock, many farmers are expanding into value-added food production, turning raw agricultural products into processed goods such as jams, honey, salsas, beverages, dairy products, and specialty meats. This diversification helps increase farm profitability, reduce waste, and enhance food security by keeping more of the food supply chain within the state.

However, starting and maintaining an agricultural business comes with significant challenges, including high operational costs, transportation expenses, workforce shortages, and regulatory barriers. A Chamber of Commerce Grant Program would help support the growth and sustainability of agricultural businesses by providing funding for technical assistance, business planning, and workforce development. By ensuring that chambers of commerce have the resources needed to assist agricultural entrepreneurs, this program will help expand market opportunities, encourage innovation, and strengthen Hawai'i's food system.

We urge the committee to pass HB 1407 to establish the Chamber of Commerce Grant Program, which will benefit Hawai'i's small businesses, agricultural producers, and value-added food entrepreneurs.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



Charter Communications  
Testimony of Rebecca Lieberman, Director of Government Affairs

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY**

Hawaii State Capitol  
Friday, February 7, 2025

**SUPPORT FOR H.B. 1407 – THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND  
TOURISM.**

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 1407, a bill that would require the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish a Chamber of Commerce Grant Program.

As the largest broadband provider in the state, Charter recognizes that reliable connectivity is fundamental to the success of modern businesses, enabling e-commerce, remote work, and digital operations that drive economic growth. We value the vital role small businesses play in fostering innovation, and we are committed to providing both connectivity and strategic investment to support their success.

Through the Spectrum Community Investment Loan Fund, Charter has dedicated over \$29 million in loan capital, capacity grant donations, and in-kind contributions to community development financial institutions (CDFIs) across the county. These investments provide underserved small

businesses with the resources needed to expand, create jobs, and strengthen local economies. We are eager to continue expanding this program.

H.B. 1407 aligns with our mission to empower entrepreneurs by providing access to capital, mentorship, and technical support. By ensuring chambers of commerce have the resources to develop mentorship programs, skill-building workshops, and business incubation initiatives, this bill will create more opportunities for Hawaii's small businesses to succeed.

In 2023, Charter extended its network to reach an additional 9,000 homes and small businesses in Hawaii, investing \$96 million across the state. Charter participated in the FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB) and Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which helped connect over 59,000 eligible households in Hawaii with high-speed broadband. Broadband internet access is more important than ever and Charter offers a variety of affordable high-speed internet packages to meet all the connectivity and budget needs of our customers. With Spectrum Internet Assist, qualifying low-income families and seniors can receive high-speed internet for only \$15 per month.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**HB-1407**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 9:20:32 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ross Wilson Jr.	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am fully supportive as the various chambers of commerce throughout the state act as the first line to actively encourage economic develop and promote economic development especially on the neighbor islands.

February 7, 2025

House Committee on Economic Development & Technology  
Representative Greggor Illagan, Chair  
Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair



*Working together for Kapolei*

Thursday, February 7, 2025, 10:00 a.m.  
Conference Room #423 and via video conference

**RE: HB 1407 Relating to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (Chamber of Commerce Grant Program)**

Dear Chair Illagan, Vice Chair Hussey and members of the Committee,

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director & CEO of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce. The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for businesses in the Kapolei region including Waipahu, Kapolei, 'Ewa Beach, Nānakūli, Wai'anae and Mākaha. The Chamber works on behalf of its members and the business community to improve the regional and State economic climate and help West O'ahu businesses thrive. We are a member-driven, member-supported organization representing the interests of all types of business: small, medium or large, for profit or non-profit businesses or sole proprietorship.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is in **strong support of HB 1407**, which will require the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to establish a Chamber of Commerce Grant Program.

One of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce's key priorities is to support West O'ahu's small businesses by providing essential resources and opportunities for growth. To achieve this, funding for workshops, business mentoring, skill development, and other critical programs is vital. **The Chamber of Commerce Grant Program presents a transformative opportunity for a regional chamber like the Kapolei Chamber to expand these resources, empowering our growing West O'ahu community and strengthening the foundation of our local small businesses.** This funding would play a crucial role in fostering economic growth, innovation, and long-term success for businesses in our region.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Best,

Kiran Polk  
Executive Director & CEO

**HB-1407**

Submitted on: 2/6/2025 10:49:48 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/7/2025 10:00:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mitchell Dodo	Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Hawaii	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Currently serving as the First Vice-President of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Hawaii, located on the Big Island of Hawaii (Hilo), I support the passage of HB1407 as the benefits of the "Chamber of Commerce Grant Program" would enable our organization to foster new leaders and businesses within our community.



# MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 423  
Friday, February 7, 2025 AT 10:00 A.M.

To The Honorable Greggor Ilagan, Chair  
The Honorable Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

## SUPPORT HB1407 RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

The Maui Chamber of Commerce **STRONGLY SUPPORTS HB1407** which requires the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to establish a Chamber of Commerce Grant Program.

The Chamber notes that 95% of our membership consists of small and micro businesses. We are dedicated to supporting our members, as well as non-members in the community who need assistance.

This proposed program offers an excellent opportunity to support local chambers across the state, all of which already play a critical role in serving and assisting businesses. It would also help us expand our programming and provide much-needed support to chambers, especially at a time when businesses, particularly on Maui, are facing significant challenges.

For these reasons, we **strongly SUPPORT HB1407**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap  
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.