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TESTIMONY OF
CAROLINE ANDERSON
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Monday, March 31, 2025
10:02 a.m.
State Capitol, Room 211

LATE

In consideration of
HB 448 HD 1
RELATING TO TECHNOLOGY ENABLEMENT

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) supports HB448 HD 1, which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to assist small businesses, including those related to the tourism sector, with technology enablement. It also sets the effective date as July 1, 3000.

In 2024, visitors spent an estimated \$21 billion across the state. The better we help small businesses connect with visitors, the more of those dollars stay in Hawai'i and circulate in our local economy.

Patronizing small local businesses and purchasing local products is a key part of our message to visitors. Additionally, a number of our initiatives directed by the community-driven Destination Management Action Plans support local businesses through visitor education, technical assistance, and capacity building.

We support HB 448 HD 1, stand ready to assist in informing visitor industry stakeholders, and defer to our colleagues at the HTDC on matters related to the implementation of this measure.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our support of HB 448 HD 1.



Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation

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JOSH GREEN M.D

GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE

LT. GOVERNOR

Written Statement of
Sandi Kanemori
Interim Executive Director
Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation
before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Monday, March 31, 2025
10:02 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
In consideration of
HB448 HD1
RELATING TO TECHNOLOGY ENABLEMENT

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee.

The Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) supports HB448 HD1, which allocates funds for technology implementation to assist small businesses, including those in the tourism sector. HTDC believes that technology is a vital tool enabling small businesses to overcome critical challenges and remain competitive in the global market.

HTDC strongly believes that technology integration is essential for Hawai'i's small businesses, particularly those in the tourism sector, to thrive in today's competitive global marketplace. By adopting digital tools and technologies, these businesses can lower operational costs, expand their market reach, and enhance customer experiences. Technology also enables small to medium-sized businesses to overcome geographical isolation by leveraging e-commerce and online market opportunities. This technological advancement is crucial for long-term economic sustainability and the growth of Hawai'i's business communities, especially in the tourism industry. Thank you for your consideration of supporting this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of supporting this bill.



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March 31, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON HB 448, HD1
RELATING TO TECHNOLOGY ENABLEMENT

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:02 AM

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, 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 448, HD1, which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to assist small businesses with technology enablement. This measure is an important step toward enhancing the economic sustainability of Hawai'i's small businesses, including those in agriculture and agritourism, by providing them with the tools needed to compete in today's digital marketplace.

Hawai'i's agritourism industry plays a vital role in diversifying farm revenue, strengthening the connection between consumers and local agriculture, and promoting sustainable economic development in rural communities. Many of our farm and ranch members operate agritourism activities—such as farm tours, farm stands, tasting experiences, and educational programs—that contribute directly to the state's tourism economy. Access to technology, including online booking platforms, digital marketing tools, and e-commerce solutions, is essential to their success.

HFB appreciates the Legislature's commitment to supporting small businesses through technology investment. This bill will help support and grow Hawai'i's agricultural industry while contributing to the broader economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



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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 Tourism

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 31, 2025

TIME: 10:02am

RE: HB448 HD1 Relating to Technology Enablement

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 HTDC has successfully facilitated numerous projects funded by the State and ensured effective use of state resources with a proven track record of fostering innovation and economic diversification through state-funded initiatives, demonstrating expertise in administering grants, supporting start-ups, promoting public-private partnerships, empowering local businesses, and driving economic progress. HTDC's expertise spans a wide range of industries, enabling the effective implementation of cutting-edge technologies tailored to Hawaii's unique challenges and opportunities. HTDC is the ideal partner to assist small businesses with technology enablement and ensure that our local businesses have the technological resources they need to grow and thrive.

We encourage the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Monday, March 31, 2025, at 10:02AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

LATE

RE: HB448 HD1 Relating to Technology Enablement

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, 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 448 House Draft 1 (HB448 HD1), which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses, including those related to the tourism sector, with technology enablement.

HB448 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Travel & Tourism. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Hawaii's small businesses, particularly those in the tourism sector, need greater stability and resilience amid seasonal fluctuations and global uncertainties. As traditional revenue streams remain volatile, adopting technology—such as online marketing platforms, booking systems, and data analytics—can help them mitigate risks, expand market reach, and improve customer engagement. Recognizing the importance of innovation, the legislature relies on the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation's (HTDC) expertise in administering technology initiatives and collaborations to promote long-term economic sustainability and adaptability.

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses account for over 99% of all Hawaii-based firms and employ more than half of the State's private workforce, illustrating the critical need for modernized solutions that will help them remain competitive in shifting economic conditions. Through a targeted appropriation, this measure enables the HTDC to guide small businesses in leveraging digital tools and enhancing competitiveness, thereby driving broader economic diversification and supporting the State's tourism industry. By positioning Hawaii's enterprises to innovate and thrive, the bill benefits both local communities and visitors alike. The Chamber supports this initiative because investing in technology solutions strengthens local entrepreneurship, fortifies economic growth, and sustains Hawaii's position as a global destination.

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 448 House Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify