



Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation

521 Ala Moana Blvd, Ste 255
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

808-539-3806

www.htdc.org

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 Economic Development and Tourism
Thursday, March 20, 2025
1:00 p.m.
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
In consideration of
HB449 HD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee.

The Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) strongly supports HB449 HD1, which provides funds to INNOVATE HAWAII to provide digital platform tools, and advanced manufacturing technology to local Hawaii manufacturers. HTDC will use the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan as the framework to leverage technology integration supporting local manufacturers.

INNOVATE HAWAII, part of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Partnership (NIST-MEP) program, supports small to medium-sized manufacturers by enhancing their productivity, growth, and technical performance, through coaching, training, and direct consulting.

HTDC believes that HB449 HD1 will significantly enhance the state's manufacturing industry by providing crucial funds for the implementation of digital platforms to assist marketing efforts of Hawaii made in products to a global market, while integrating advanced manufacturing technology to improve productivity. This support will enable small to medium-sized manufacturers, especially those in the tourism sector, to adopt digital platform tools supporting Ecommerce, Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), and mobile applications to grow and development new global markets. Also, by using implementing advanced manufacturing will result in improving productivity, reducing costs, and expanding market reach that will ultimately leading to long-term economic sustainability for Hawaii's manufacturing sector.

HTDC supports this bill so long as its passage does not adversely impact the Administration's priorities in the Executive Budget. Thank you for your consideration of supporting this bill.



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 1:00PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

RE: HB449 HD1 Relating to Economic Development

Aloha e Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, 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 449 House Draft 1 (HB449 HD1), which appropriates funds to assist in the development and promotion of Hawai'i-manufactured products through the INNOVATE Hawai'i program.

HB449 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.

Given the growing need for advanced technology integration and resilient local manufacturing, the INNOVATE Hawaii program is essential to enhancing Hawaii's competitive edge. Notably, this program has been operational for over 20 years and is one of 52 centers nationwide funded by the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Manufacturing Extension Program.

The INNOVATE Hawaii program has supported local manufacturers by reshoring U.S. federal initiatives and equipping small businesses with the necessary technology and expertise for development, manufacturing, operations, and marketing of "Made in Hawaii" products. To advance this mission, the legislature has appropriated funds from the State of Hawaii's general revenues for fiscal years 2025–2026 and 2026–2027, with the funds managed by the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation. This bill seeks a two-year appropriation of \$500,000 per fiscal year from the State of Hawaii's general revenues, thereby providing a solid financial foundation for the INNOVATE Hawaii program and its initiatives to promote local manufacturing and technological advancement. The Chamber supports this initiative because it provides the critical financial and technological resources needed to strengthen the state's manufacturing sector and drive sustainable 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 449 House Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |

Honolulu, HI 96813

P: 808-533-1292 | e:

info@hawaiiifood.com

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Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*

Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Economic Development

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 20, 2025

TIME: 1pm

RE: HB449 HD1 Relating to Economic Development

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 strong support of this measure. As the measure notes the Hawaii technology development corporation's expertise spans a wide range of industries, enabling the effective implementation of cutting-edge technologies tailored to Hawaii's unique challenges and opportunities. Its commitment to leveraging state funding for impactful technology projects underscores its role as a critical catalyst for innovation and competitiveness in Hawaii's economy.

We support the purpose of this measure to appropriate funds for assisting in the development and promotion of Hawaii-manufactured products through the INNOVATE Hawaii program. For 30 years HFIA has proudly produced the Made in Hawaii Festival and HTDC is our official manufacturing partner. We know first hand the tremendous power and future potential of our local manufactures. Many of our Made in Hawaii Festival vendors, HFIA members, and other local manufacturers have successfully utilized HTDC programs including the INNOVATE Hawaii program.

INNOVATE Hawaii can be a vital resource to help individual companies grow, expand, and thrive. When we support and increase Hawaii manufacturing we all benefit; our economy is strengthened and diversified, jobs are created, and we all have access to more great Made in Hawaii products. We encourage the committee to pass this measure and thank you for the opportunity to testify.



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 229
Thursday, March 20, 2025, 1:00 P.M.

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
Members of the committee on Economic Development and Tourism

SUPPORT HB449 HD1 RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Maui Chamber of Commerce wholeheartedly **SUPPORTS HB449 HD1** which establishes a program that provides technology enablement for small businesses related to tourism in the State. Appropriates funds for assisting in the development and promotion of Hawai'i-manufactured products through the INNOVATE Hawai'i program.

The Chamber agrees that the tourism sector, a cornerstone of the state's economy, is highly seasonal and vulnerable to global economic shifts, natural disasters, and pandemics. These factors leave small businesses with inconsistent revenue streams and heightened risks. These compounded pressures have forced many small enterprises to operate with razor-thin margins, making resilience and adaptability essential for survival.

Furthermore, we agree that technology adoption is crucial for small businesses in Hawai'i, particularly those in the tourism sector, to overcome these challenges and remain competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace. Leveraging digital tools such as booking systems, online marketing platforms, and data analytics can help reduce costs, expand market reach, and enhance customer attraction and retention while improving the overall visitor experience. Technology also mitigates the risks of geographic isolation by enabling remote work, virtual services, and e-commerce opportunities.

Supporting small businesses in adopting technology ensures their ability to innovate and adapt, strengthening their resilience and contributing to the long-term economic sustainability of Hawai'i's communities.

For these reasons, we **SUPPORT HB449 HD1**.

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.



Watanabe *floral*

www.watanabefloral.com | info@watanabefloral.com | (808) 832-9360

Testimony to the House Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair

Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 1:00PM

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

RE: HB449 HD1 Relating to Economic Development

Aloha e Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Monty Pereira, GM and Sales and Marketing Director at Watanabe Floral. I am in support of House Bill 449 House Draft 1 (HB449 HD1), which appropriates funds to assist in the development and promotion of Hawai'i-manufactured products through the INNOVATE Hawai'i program.

This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Supporting local manufacturing is key to strengthening Hawaii's economy, creating jobs, and expanding the reach of "Made in Hawaii" products. The federally funded INNOVATE Hawaii program, under the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC), has supported local manufacturers for over 20 years. As part of a national network of 52 Manufacturing Extension Partnership centers, it provides funding, technology, and resources to help businesses develop, manufacture, and market their products. By introducing advanced technologies, the program enhances efficiency, improves operations, and supports reshoring U.S. manufacturing. Expanding

its funding will further strengthen local businesses and boost Hawaii-made products' competitiveness.

This bill funds HTDC to grow and promote Hawaii's manufacturing sector through INNOVATE Hawaii. The investment will help small businesses access technology, improve production, and expand market opportunities, driving economic resilience. By supporting local manufacturing, this initiative fosters job creation, diversifies the economy, and enhances Hawaii's competitiveness. The Chamber supports this effort as it empowers manufacturers, strengthens supply chains, and creates lasting economic opportunities for businesses and workers statewide.

I respectfully ask to pass House Bill 449 House Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Monty Pereira
General Manager and Sales & Marketing Director
Watanabe Floral, Inc.
monty@watanabefloral.com