

DEPARTMENT OF LIQUOR CONTROL

LEO SANDOVAL-REYES, DIRECTOR



DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR
REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Testimony of Leo Sandoval-Reyes
Director of Liquor Control, County of Kaua'i

Before the
Committee on Judiciary
February 13, 2024, at 10:00 am
Room 016 & Via Videoconference

In consideration of
HB 159 HD1 SD1
Relating to Liquor Licenses

Honorable Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard, and Committee Members:

The County of Kauai would like to **strongly support** HB159 HD2 SD1 which exempts the notarization requirement for renewals of liquor licenses.

The Department of Liquor Control in the County of Kaua'i recently shifted to a digital format for processing renewals of existing licenses in the past year. However, we faced challenges in utilizing the technology as intended due to the requirement of notarization for renewals. The notarization requirement significantly hindered our efforts in expediting the processing of renewal applications. While the requirement is appropriate for new license applications and transfers, it is unnecessary for renewals.

In addition, if passed and processed for early transmittal to the Governor, could begin utilizing this advantage this year prior to the due date of their annual renewals on Kaua'i in June.

Thank you for your consideration to provide comments in **strong support** of HB159 HD1 SD1.

Sincerely,

Leo Sandoval-Reyes

Director

LIQUOR COMMISSION
KOMIKINA KĀKA'ĀHI WAI 'ONA
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

711 KAPI'OLANI BOULEVARD, SUITE 600, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5249
PHONE (808) 768-7300 • FAX (808) 768-7311
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RICK BLANGIARDI
MAYOR
MEIA

February 9, 2024

The Honorable Karl Rhoads, Chair
The Honorable Mike Gabbard, Vice Chair
Committee on Judiciary
State Senate
State Capitol, Room 228
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Chair Rhoads and Vice Chair Gabbard:

SUBJECT: House Bill No. 159 HD1 SD1
Relating to Liquor Licenses

We write to express our appreciation of your decision to hear the above-referenced bill. If passed and processed for early transmittal to the Governor, licensees may take advantage of its proposed relief in time for the upcoming liquor license renewal process, which will commence in April.

The notarization of renewal applications was added as part of last year's Act 76 (SLH 2022), and its inclusion does not further regulatory oversight. License applications must be notarized when they are first submitted. Once a licensee has been approved, it seems redundant to require notarization on a license renewal application when the licensee is already licensed, in the system, and known to the particular liquor commission. In addition to being redundant, the notarization requirement will hinder the four counties' efforts to switch to digital/electronic renewal of licenses. It is reasonable to get the assurances represented by a notarized signature when an individual or entity is making an initial license application or seeks to transfer the license to an applicant – it makes less sense once the individual or entity is already a licensee and simply seeks to renew the license. Clarification of the notarization requirement as shown in the SD1 appropriately retains the requirement for new and transfer applications but eliminates the requirement from renewal applications.

We **strongly support** the revisions contained in the SD1. Opposition to this housekeeping measure has been non-existent, while favorable action in time for the upcoming liquor license renewal process in April will benefit licensees statewide. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 159 HD1 SD1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Salvador D. Petilos".

Salvador D. Petilos
Administrato

SDP:ACH

JEFFREY HONG
CHAIRPERSON
LĀLA

DILLON HULLINGER
CO-VICE CHAIRPERSON
HOPE LĀLA

LISA MARTIN
CO-VICE CHAIRPERSON
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KEVIN SAKAMOTO
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SALVADOR D. PETILOS
ADMINISTRATOR
LUNA

ANNA C. HIRAI
ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR
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RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.
Mayor

JOSIAH K. NISHITA
Managing Director



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February 12, 2024

TO: Representative Mark M. Nakashima, Chair
Representative Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair
Committee on Consumer and Protection Commerce

FROM: Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor
Layne Silva, Director of Liquor Control

DATE: February 12, 2024

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF HB159, HD1, SD1, RELATING TO LIQUOR LICENSES**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **SUPPORT** of this important measure. The Act Exempts the notarization requirement for renewals of liquor licenses.

We **SUPPORT** this measure for the following reasons:

1. This bill will remove a redundancy that will create for less cumbersome renewals since all applicants are vetted at the time of the original application and/or when added to a license.
2. This bill will allow for implementing electronic submissions of liquor license applications, greatly creating more efficiencies for applicant and Maui County.

For the foregoing reasons, we **SUPPORT** this measure.



**TESTIMONY OF TINA YAMAKI, PRESIDENT
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
FEBRUARY 13, 2024
Re: HB 159 HD1 SD1 RELATING TO LIQUOR LICENSES**

Good morning, Chair Rhoads and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary. I am Tina Yamaki, President of the Retail Merchants of Hawaii and I appreciate this opportunity to testify.

The Retail Merchants of Hawaii was founded in 1901, RMH is a statewide, not for profit trade organization committed to the growth and development of the retail industry in Hawaii. Our membership includes small mom & pop stores, large box stores, resellers, luxury retail, department stores, shopping malls, local, national, and international retailers, chains, and everyone in between.

We **STRONGLY SUPPORT** HB 159 HD1. This measure exempts the notarization requirement for renewals of liquor licenses.

It is our understanding that in the initial process to apply for a license, notary is required. Once the license is approved, we question why it would need to be notarized again for renewal purposes? Notary is NOT free and there is also a cost with the time a person spends to have to obtain a notarized document. This measure would help to streamline the process, especially when it comes to the renewal of licenses.

We appreciate measures that help businesses.

Mahalo for this opportunity to testify.

2/12/2024

To: Senator Karl Rhoads, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee

Dear Chair Rhoads, Vice-Chair Gabbard and Members of the Committee, .

My name is Jeff Hong I am the CEO of Techmana LLC. Techmana is a Hawai'i based software development and cybersecurity company. I testify in **strong support of HB159.**

LOCAL NEWS

Honolulu Liquor Commission updates services as new law take effect

by: [Sandy Harjo-Livingston](#)
Posted: Jun 16, 2023 / 05:17 PM HST
Updated: Jun 16, 2023 / 05:17 PM HST



Honolulu Liquor Commission seal

SHARE    

HONOLULU (KHON2) — There are new glitches at the Honolulu Liquor Commission that have arisen due to new legislation going into effect.

The **Honolulu Liquor Commission** has announced that they are aware of the many difficulties businesses are having with renewing their liquor licenses.

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Businesses who need their liquor licenses renewed for the July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024 year are going to run into issues.

Changes in the law that now requires notarization for renewal applications that was imposed by Act 76 (SLH 2022) are what the liquor commission is citing as the issue.

As a result, the City has said they will provide a complimentary notary public at the Liquor Commission office.



TRENDING STORIES



I am currently the Chair of the Honolulu Liquor Commission. I testify only in a personal capacity.

As a small business owner, I understand bureaucratic processes are a part of the job. When Mayor Blangiardi asked me to serve on the Honolulu Liquor Commission in late 2022, I thought this was a good opportunity to affect streamlining a small portion of the operations in our city government. It is in this spirit that I ask that you support this measure.

I joined a department grossly understaffed with negative headlines streaming from local media. I was thankful for Assistant Administrator Anna Hirai's leadership in staffing a notary in the office and communicating with the liquor licensee community. It alleviated one of the many issues in the department.

Requiring a notary to the liquor licenses renewal adds little to the integrity of the process and adds a small but significant hurdle to our business community. Please help us eliminate this hurdle.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Hong

HB-159-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/9/2024 12:31:46 PM

Testimony for JDC on 2/13/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kenneth G. K. Hoo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I represent numerous holders of liquor licenses in the State of Hawaii and am in full support of this bill which would do away with the notary requirement for license renewals. The application process for liquor licenses already requires a notary acknowledgement and this added requirement for renewals is unnecessary, burdensome and another hinderance to the doing of business in Hawaii.

Please pass this bill. Thank you.