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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
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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, March 21, 2025
10:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of
HCR 140 / HR 134
**URGING THE HAWAII SISTER-STATE COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE AND DEVELOP
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INITIATION OF A SISTER-STATE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HAWAII AND NEW ZEALAND TO FOSTER
STRONGER TIES IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ARTS AND CULTURAL
EXCHANGE, EDUCATION, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY.**

Chairs Ilagan and Kapela, Vice Chairs Hussey and Kong and members of the Committees. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) offers comments on **HCR 140 / HR 134** which urges the Hawaii sister-state committee to evaluate and develop recommendations for the initiation of a sister-state relationship between Hawaii and New Zealand to foster stronger ties in economic development, arts and cultural exchange, education, and environmental sustainability.

Hawaii and New Zealand share many economic, cultural, educational, and environmental areas of potential cooperation.

New Zealand is a country, not a state. Unlike Australia and Canada, New Zealand's subnational governments are not equivalent to states or provinces. As such, DBEDT would recommend exploring a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between

Hawaii and New Zealand as a more practical approach than a sister-state relationship to further our cooperation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.