

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair

Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair

Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 10:30AM

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

RE: SB989 SD1 Relating to Economic Development

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 Senate Bill 989 Senate Draft 1 (SB989 SD1), which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement. Requires a report to the Legislature.

SB989 SD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Small Business. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

Supporting small businesses in Hawaii with technology adoption is essential for overcoming geographic and economic challenges, enhancing competitiveness, and ensuring long-term sustainability. The legislature recognizes that in a digital economy, small businesses must adopt tools like online booking, data analytics, and digital marketing to remain competitive. These technologies are especially beneficial for tourism businesses, helping them attract customers and improve visitor experiences. Additionally, technology reduces geographic limitations by enabling remote work, virtual services, and e-commerce. Without support, small businesses may struggle to adapt, weakening Hawaii's economy.

To address this, the legislature aims to boost economic growth by funding technology enablement for small businesses. The Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC), with a strong track record in innovation and state-funded tech programs, will lead this initiative. HTDC will implement the program and report progress to the legislature before the 2026 session. Chamber supports this effort, recognizing that equipping small businesses with technology strengthens competitiveness, drives economic diversification, and ensures long-term prosperity for Hawaii.

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 Senate Bill 989 Senate Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*

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TO: Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 27, 2025

TIME: 10:30am

RE: SB989 SD1 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 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.



Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

SB 989 SD1 - Relating to Economic Development – IN SUPPORT

Thursday, February 27, 2025 10:30 AM

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

On behalf of the Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce, representing over 300 businesses and individual members primarily on the East side of Hawai'i Island, I submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 989 Senate Draft 1 (SB989 SD1). This bill appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to assist small businesses with technology adoption and requires a progress report to the Legislature.

SB989 SD1 aligns with the Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i's *2030 Blueprint for Hawai'i: An Economic Action Plan*, specifically under the Small Business policy pillar. Supporting small businesses with technology is essential for overcoming geographic challenges, enhancing competitiveness, and ensuring long-term sustainability. Digital tools—such as online booking, data analytics, and e-commerce—help businesses remain competitive, particularly in tourism. Without support, many small businesses risk falling behind, weakening Hawai'i's economy.

This bill funds technology enablement initiatives led by HTDC, a proven leader in fostering innovation. HTDC will implement the program and report progress to the Legislature before the 2026 session. We strongly support this effort, recognizing that equipping small businesses with technology strengthens competitiveness, drives diversification, and fosters long-term prosperity.

Our Chamber is committed to policies that strengthen competitiveness, expand workforce opportunities, and build local wealth. We respectfully urge the passage of SB989 SD1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Carla Kuo

Executive Officer

Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce



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February 27, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 989, SD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
10:30 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 SB 989, SD1, 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.



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
Hawaii Technology Development Corporation
before the
Senate Committee On Ways and Means
Thursday, February 27, 2025
10:30 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
In consideration of
SB989, SD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

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

The Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) supports **SB989, SD1** that appropriates funds to the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to assist small businesses with technology enablement. This bill is crucial for the economic development of our state, as it addresses the technological challenges faced by small businesses and helps them remain competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace.

The HTDC has a proven track record of fostering innovation and economic diversification through state-funded initiatives. By supporting small businesses with technology adoption, we can optimize operations, reduce costs, and expand market reach. This will not only benefit the businesses themselves but also contribute to the long-term economic sustainability of Hawaii's communities.

HTDC also believes this new initiative will positive economic development value for the State. We support this provided it doesn't replace or adversely impact administrative priorities in the Executive Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments

February 26, 2025

RE: Support for SB 989 SD1 – Relating to Economic Development

Dear Chair Donovan, Vice Chair Moriwaka, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

Founded in 1968, the Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce works to enhance the quality of life for our community through a strong, sustainable economy on Hawai'i Island. Representing 460 businesses and organizations, our mission is to provide leadership and advocacy for a successful business environment in West Hawai'i.

We **strongly support** SB 989 SD1, which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and technology adoption is essential for their growth and competitiveness in an increasingly digital world. By investing in technology improvements, this bill will empower small businesses—including those in the visitor industry—to optimize operations, expand their reach through digital marketing, and enhance customer engagement. Supporting innovation at this level strengthens not only individual businesses but also the long-term economic sustainability of our communities.

We urge you to vote in favor of SB 989 SD1, which would support Hawai'i's small businesses, foster entrepreneurship, and drive economic resilience.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Wendy J. Laros, President and CEO
Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce

SB-989-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 11:58:08 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Monty Pereira	Testifying for Watanabe Floral, Inc	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means**Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair****Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair****Thursday, February 27, 2025, at 10:30AM****Conference Room 211 & Videoconference****RE: SB989 SD1 Relating to Economic Development**

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

My name is Monty Pereira, GM of Watanabe Floral, Inc. I support Senate Bill 989 Senate Draft 1 (SB989 SD1), which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement. Requires a report to the Legislature.

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Supporting small businesses in Hawaii with technology adoption is essential for overcoming geographic and economic challenges, enhancing competitiveness, and ensuring long-term sustainability. The legislature recognizes that in a digital economy, small businesses must adopt tools like online booking, data analytics, and digital marketing to remain competitive. These technologies are especially beneficial for tourism businesses, helping them attract customers and improve visitor experiences. Additionally, technology reduces geographic limitations by enabling remote work, virtual services, and e-commerce. Without support, small businesses may struggle to adapt, weakening Hawaii's economy.

To address this, the legislature aims to boost economic growth by funding technology enablement for small businesses. The Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC), with a strong track record in innovation and state-funded tech programs, will lead this initiative. HTDC will implement the program and report progress to the legislature before the 2026 session. Chamber supports this effort, recognizing that equipping small businesses with technology strengthens competitiveness, drives economic diversification, and ensures long-term prosperity for Hawaii.

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We respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 989 Senate Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-989-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/25/2025 9:58:37 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/27/2025 10:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alireza Ali	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Fully support continued funding for HTDC and prootion of technology across the state.