



Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation

521 Ala Moana Blvd, Ste 255  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

808-539-3806

[www.htdc.org](http://www.htdc.org)

**JOSH GREEN M.D**

GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**

LT. GOVERNOR

Written Statement of  
**Wayne Inouye**  
Innovate Hawaii Center Director  
Hawaii Technology Development Corporation  
before the  
Senate Committee On Economic Development and Tourism  
Thursday, January 30, 2025  
1:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
In consideration of  
SB989  
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

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

The Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) supports **SB989** that appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small business with technology enablement.

HTDC was established in 1983 with the mission of supporting and fostering innovation and driving economic development in Hawai'i. HTDC has a proven track record of supporting technology-driven initiatives across various industries in Hawai'i.

HTDC programs will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advance technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai'i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market. HTDC will also support local businesses supporting Hawai'i's tourism sector to leverage and use technology tools like ecommerce and virtual services to reduce operation cost and increase sales.

HTDC 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



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |

Honolulu, HI 96813

P: 808-533-1292 | e:

[info@hawaiiifood.com](mailto:info@hawaiiifood.com)

#### **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: January 30, 2025

TIME: 1pm

RE: SB989 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.



## Testimony to the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Thursday, January 30, 2025, at 1:00PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

**RE: SB989 Relating to Economic Development**

**LATE**

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 Senate Bill 989 (SB989), which appropriates funds to the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

SB989 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.

This bill promotes economic development by helping small businesses adopt technology to stay competitive in a digital marketplace. Investments in digital tools like online marketing, booking systems, and data analytics will enhance operations, reduce costs, and expand market reach beyond Hawaii, ensuring long-term sustainability.

With its expertise, the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) is well-equipped to lead this effort, fostering innovation and economic diversification. By allocating \$500,000 for technology enablement, this bill empowers small businesses to modernize and adapt, strengthening the state's economy. The Chamber supports this initiative as it equips local businesses with essential tools to compete, grow, and drive lasting economic resilience.

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. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Statement of  
Ethan West  
CEO  
Piko Provisions  
before the  
**Senate Committee on and Economic Development and Tourism**

Thursday, January 30, 2025  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**SB989**  
**RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.

Piko Provisions **supports** SB989 that appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai'i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

Piko Provisions, a Hawai'i-based baby food company dedicated to increasing access to nutritious, locally grown foods for Hawai'i's families. We create high-quality, shelf-stable baby food using whole food ingredients sourced from local farms, ensuring that the next generation has access to healthy, culturally relevant nutrition from the start.

Piko Provisions has seen tremendous growth since our founding, recently being recognized as one of Hawai'i's fastest-growing companies and one of the Top 100 small businesses in the U.S. by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. We are expanding our product offerings, hiring additional team members, and building capacity through a new production facility. Programs offered by HTDC (Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation) have been instrumental in supporting Hawai'i's growing food and manufacturing industries, providing critical infrastructure, funding, and technical

assistance that allow small businesses like ours to scale efficiently and compete in larger markets.

This appropriation would provide vital support to local businesses like Piko Provisions as we work to expand into new markets, including Walmart and additional mainland retailers. By strengthening Hawai'i's food system infrastructure, we can create more jobs, keep more food dollars circulating within our state, and decrease reliance on imports—key priorities for a resilient and sustainable Hawai'i. Currently, our team includes five dedicated members, with plans to grow further upon the official opening of our new facility. HTDC's resources would directly impact our ability to accelerate hiring, improve production capacity, and bring innovative, locally made food products to more families.

I respectfully urge your support of this bill to ensure that HTDC continues to empower Hawai'i's entrepreneurs, foster economic development, and strengthen our local food economy.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Ethan West

Founder & CEO, Piko Provisions, PBC



4009 Black Point Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816

Statement of  
**Rex Jakobovits, PhD**  
**President,**  
**Experiad LLC**  
before the  
**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism**

Thursday, February 1, 2024  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**SB989**  
**RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.

Experiad **supports** SB989 that appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai'i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

Experiad was recently named as one of the **Top Startups to Watch** in Pacific Business News. We could not have achieved this success without HTDC and the State's SBIR matching grants funds. As you know, small businesses are the backbone of our local economy, providing jobs and driving innovation. By providing these businesses with access to additional funding, we are supporting their ability to grow and expand, leading to increased economic activity and job creation. Furthermore, SBIR grants provide valuable opportunities for small businesses to bring their innovative ideas to market, which can have a positive impact on the local economy by attracting new businesses and industries to our state.



4009 Black Point Rd, Honolulu, HI 96816

Our story is direct proof that the HTDC SBIR program is critical to attracting high tech startups to Hawaii, and it has brought millions of additional federal dollars to our local economy. My software startup Experiad has received matching funds for our Phase I and Phase II SBIRs, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop software for behavioral therapists who **treat kids with autism**. The funds distributed by HTDC have been critical to our success, allowing us to conduct an extensive field test of our prototype product in the homes of kids with autism. The data we gathered allowed us to win a new fast-track NIH grant proposal last year. We could not have done it without the research funded by the Hawaii matching grant. Thus, **the Hawaii SBIR matching grant was directly responsible for us being awarded \$3.6M in additional federal dollars**. That money is feeding the local high tech economy, and acting as critical seed capital that will generate dozens of high tech jobs in Hawaii if we succeed.

Furthermore, HTDC has served as a critical conduit for bringing Hawaii tech entrepreneurs together, leading to collaboration and team-building that propelled our success. We met our VP of Clinical Product, Emaley McCulloch, when she was building a business within HTDC's manoa site, and without her, we would not be where we are today. HTDC is a vital hub for Hawaii's technology entrepreneurship, and we are an example of that.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the Senate Committee to consider appropriating state funds to match Small Business Innovative Research grants. This investment in our small businesses will pay dividends for our local economy, creating jobs and driving economic growth. HTDC is exactly the type of investment that our economy needs right now.

Mahalo for listening!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rex Jakobovits", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Rex Jakobovits, PhD  
President, Experiad LLC



AI.FISH

Ai.Fish  
Kailua, HI  
<http://www.ai.fish>

Statement of  
**Jimmy Freese**  
**CEO**  
**Ai.Fish**  
before the  
**Senate Committee on and Economic Development and Tourism**  
Thursday, January 30, 2025  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
In consideration of  
**SB989**  
**RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.

Ai.Fish **supports** SB989 that appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai'i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

The programs run by HTDC have been extremely valuable for us be a worldwide competitive local startup based in Hawaii .We currently employ 15 people with a few of them UH students and are in the process of bringing an AI Engineer from the mainland to live and work in Hawaii. In the current AI space, things are extremely competitive and for us to stay a thriving company based in Hawaii the support from HTDC is instrumental.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Mahalo,  
Jimmy Freese, Co-Founder and CEO, Ai.Fish





AI.FISH

Ai.Fish  
Kailua, HI  
<http://www.ai.fish>



Statement of  
**Charlie Field**  
**Senior Engineer**  
**PacMar Technologies**  
before the  
**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism**

Thursday, January 30, 2025  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**SB989**  
**RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.

PacMar Technologies **supports** SB989 that appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai'i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

PacMar Technologies was founded in 1979 with its home office and headquarters in Honolulu, Hawaii. PacMar Technologies' research team has world-class expertise in advanced ship hull hydrodynamic research, naval architecture, alternative energy, autonomy and artificial intelligence, and other maritime technologies. PacMar Technologies produces innovation through research—inventing, innovating, developing, building, and testing advanced technologies.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

**SB-989**

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 7:26:10 AM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paolo Vidali	Testifying for Hidden Gears	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Statement of

**Paolo Vidali**

**CEO**

**Hidden Gears**

before the

**Senate Committee on and Economic Development and Tourism**

Thursday, January 30, 2025

1:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of

**SB989**

**RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.

Hidden Gears **supports** SB989 that appropriates funds to the Hawai`i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai`i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

We have seen first hand how much HTDC has helped small businesses, including local manufacturers, scale and grow in the state, which directly leads to positive economic outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.



**Statement of  
Bahman Sadeghi  
Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii, Owner & CEO  
before the  
Senate Committee on and Economic Development and Tourism**

Thursday, January 30, 2025  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

**In consideration of  
SB989  
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism:

Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii strongly **supports** SB989 that appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai'i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

**Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii**  
94-272 Pupuole Street  
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797 USA  
PO Box 970998  
(808) 949-6161  
[www.lanimoo.com](http://www.lanimoo.com)



Meadow Gold, a local and family-owned business, has directly benefited from HTDC. In a complex business environment, small businesses in Hawaii need help to become globally competitive in a global market. As a business, we plan to expand beyond the state borders, and utilizing HTDC's network and assistance will allow us to pursue the scale and growth we need to thrive in a global economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Mahalo,

Bahman Sadeghi

Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii

**Meadow Gold Dairies Hawaii**

94-272 Pupuole Street

Waipahu, Hawaii 96797 USA

PO Box 970998

(808) 949-6161

[www.lanimoo.com](http://www.lanimoo.com)



WaiHome LLC  
59-477 Hoalike Road  
Haleiwa, HI, 96712

Statement of  
Gregory Wong  
Co-Founder and New Product Introduction Engineer  
WaiHome LLC  
before the  
**Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism**

Thursday, January 30, 2025  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**SB989**  
**RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism.

WaiHome LLC supports SB989 that appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai'i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

WaiHome LLC is a small R&D company that is developing an alternative onsite wastewater treatment product that is more affordable and more eco-friendly than septic systems. Bills like this help to support our current R&D, and future manufacturing in the State of Hawaii. As a result, WaiHome can provide homeowners with affordable cesspool replacements, and minimize the effect of polluted runoff in our streams and ocean.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Wong", written over a horizontal line.

Gregory Wong  
Co-founder and New Product Introduction Engineer  
WaiHome LLC

**SB-989**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 8:51:26 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cymbree Kailiehu	Testifying for Cymz_Sweet_Kre8tionz LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha All,

I am Cymbree Kailiehu, small business owner of a dessert shop here in Hawaii, Maui. I am in support of this bill, as we need more research to be done on future technology. It can help guide us in the right direction, if used for "good" things to better us. Not the "wrong" things. Help us in health, help is medical, help us in creating and becoming a more sustabinable state.

Thank you for your time, and consideration in hearing my testimony.

Cymbree Kailiehu



**SB-989**

Submitted on: 1/29/2025 8:52:18 AM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ronald Weidenbach	Testifying for Hawaii Fish Company Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Hawaii Fish Company Inc. (HFC) supports SB989 which appropriate funds to HTDC to assist small businesses with technology enablement. Our aquaculture farm and innovative technology R&D company has benefited from the training, technology support, and Hawaii SBIR matching grant program since 1993.

HTDC has a long and proven record with assisting and supporting Hawaii's small business technology sector, and their dedicated team makes excellent use of the funds appropriated to their programs. Please continue to support HTDC's valued efforts to assist Hawaii's small businesses with their technology enablement.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB989.

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for **Senate Bill 989**, which appropriates funds to the **Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC)** to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

For nearly a decade, **HTDC has been a pivotal partner to XLR8HI**, enabling us to support over **150 Hawai'i-based companies**. Collectively, these companies have **raised over \$50 million in funding, generated an additional \$100 million in revenue, and created more than 500 jobs** across the state. Notably, **100% of these companies are Hawai'i-based entrepreneurs**, with **30-40% coming from neighbor islands**, demonstrating the widespread impact of these programs.

A key indicator of success for many of these companies has been their ability to **secure non-dilutive Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) capital**, bringing **federal research dollars into Hawai'i** and strengthening our state's innovation economy. By leveraging SBIR funding, these businesses have been able to **develop cutting-edge technology, commercialize research, and scale without sacrificing ownership**, ultimately creating high-quality jobs and increasing the economic resilience of our local business ecosystem.

Thanks in large part to **HTDC's partnership and its critical resources supporting SBIR and manufacturing**, **XLR8HI has been recognized as the most awarded accelerator program in the nation** by the **U.S. SBA Growth Accelerator Fund Competition**, having won this prestigious award **six times**. Further solidifying the success of our partnership, **Forbes recognized XLR8UH as one of the Top 30 Accelerator Programs in the Nation**—a testament to what is possible in Hawai'i when we invest in **R&D, technology, and, of course, our world-class entrepreneurial talent**.

The **technology enablement assistance funded by SB989 is essential** for sustaining and expanding this momentum. By providing small businesses with the tools and support they need to integrate and leverage technology, we can enhance their competitiveness, foster innovation, and drive economic growth across the state.

**Continued investment in these initiatives will not only drive economic diversification but also reinforce Hawai'i's position as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship.** I respectfully urge the committee to pass SB989 to ensure that **HTDC can maintain and enhance its support for our state's small businesses and startups.**

Sincerely,



Tarik Sultan  
Managing Director  
XLR8HI

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for **Senate Bill 989**, which appropriates funds to the **Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC)** to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

For nearly a decade, **HTDC has been a pivotal partner to XLR8HI**, a Sultan Ventures company, enabling us to support over **150 Hawai'i-based companies**. Collectively, these companies have **raised over \$50 million in funding, generated an additional \$100 million in revenue, and created more than 500 jobs** across the state. Notably, **100% of these companies are Hawai'i-based entrepreneurs**, with **30-40% coming from neighbor islands**, demonstrating the widespread impact of these programs.

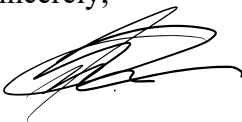
A key indicator of success for many of these companies has been their ability to **secure non-dilutive Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) capital**, bringing **federal research dollars into Hawai'i** and strengthening our state's innovation economy. By leveraging SBIR funding, these businesses have been able to **develop cutting-edge technology, commercialize research, and scale without sacrificing ownership**, ultimately creating high-quality jobs and increasing the economic resilience of our local business ecosystem.

Thanks in large part to **HTDC's partnership and its critical resources supporting SBIR and manufacturing**, **XLR8HI has been recognized as the most awarded accelerator program in the nation** by the **U.S. SBA Growth Accelerator Fund Competition**, having won this prestigious award **six times**. Further solidifying the success of our partnership, **Forbes recognized XLR8UH as one of the Top 30 Accelerator Programs in the Nation**—a testament to what is possible in Hawai'i when we invest in **R&D, technology, and, of course, our world-class entrepreneurial talent**.

The **technology enablement assistance funded by SB989 is essential** for sustaining and expanding this momentum. By providing small businesses with the tools and support they need to integrate and leverage technology, we can enhance their competitiveness, foster innovation, and drive economic growth across the state.

**Continued investment in these initiatives will not only drive economic diversification but also reinforce Hawai'i's position as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship**. I respectfully urge the committee to pass SB989 to ensure that **HTDC can maintain and enhance its support for our state's small businesses and startups**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Omar Sultan', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Omar Sultan  
Managing Partner  
Sultan Ventures

**SB-989**

Submitted on: 1/28/2025 10:27:52 PM

Testimony for EDT on 1/30/2025 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Seth Kamemoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support HTDC's efforts to advance technology initiatives in the State.

**Statement of  
Gabriel Yanagihara  
Educator & AI Consultant**  
[www.gabrielyanagihara.com](http://www.gabrielyanagihara.com)

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism**

**Thursday, January 30, 2025 1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**In consideration of SB989  
*RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT***

**Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Economic  
Development and Tourism:**

I, Gabriel Yanagihara, support SB989, which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

As an educator and AI consultant, I have worked extensively with Hawai'i's schools, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to expand AI literacy, workforce training, and digital transformation initiatives. My mission is to equip local educators, entrepreneurs, and small businesses with the skills and tools necessary to thrive in an increasingly technology-driven world.

HTDC can play a crucial role in ensuring that Hawai'i's businesses have access to modern digital tools and emerging technologies that enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and foster economic growth. By leveraging its extensive network of technology and manufacturing companies, HTDC can provide critical training and implementation support to small businesses, allowing them to scale operations, remain globally competitive, and sustain well-paying jobs in Hawai'i.

Investing in technology enablement and digital adoption is essential for Hawai'i's long-term economic sustainability. By funding HTDC's initiatives, we can empower small business owners, educators, and entrepreneurs with the knowledge and resources they need to optimize operations, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to the local economy. This investment will help ensure that our workforce remains competitive, keeping talent and opportunity within the state rather than seeing it migrate elsewhere. It would also allow consultants like me to partner with HTDC to support smaller and newer businesses who would otherwise be unable to retain and afford my consulting services.

I strongly encourage the passage of SB989 to support small businesses in Hawai'i and strengthen our local economy through technology-driven solutions.