



TESTIMONY OF
CAROLINE ANDERSON
Interim President & CEO
Hawai'i Tourism Authority
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

9:30 a.m.

State Capitol, Room 309

In consideration of

HB 1609

RELATING TO NAMING RIGHTS

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Members of the Committee:

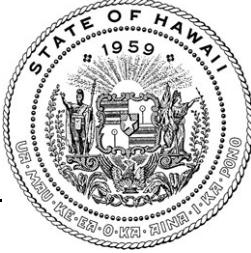
The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) offers comments on HB 1609, which would allow the naming rights for the Stadium and Convention Center to be leased to any public or private entity. It also requires any revenue derived from advertising or marketing in or on the Stadium or Convention Center to be deposited into the appropriate special fund of the facility. It also sets the effective date as July 1, 3000.

Our testimony will focus on the Hawai'i Convention Center, which HTA manages. Over the quarter-century that the Hawai'i Convention Center (HCC) has been operating, it has hosted high-profile international convenings, national and local conferences and conventions, beloved festivals and events, athletic events attracting participants locally and from abroad, and served as an essential hub for the state's response to emergencies.

We appreciate that this measure opens up additional funding possibilities to address the convention center's repair and maintenance needs in the future. However, we are concerned that naming rights for repair and maintenance financed by tax-exempt General Obligation (G.O.) bonds may be classified as "private business use" under the Internal Revenue Code. Federal tax regulations place restrictions on the private use of proceeds from tax-exempt bonds and on the capital improvement program (CIP) projects financed by those proceeds. If these federal regulations regarding private use of bond proceeds and bond-financed properties are not followed, it could threaten the tax-exempt status of the bonds, resulting in significant tax consequences.

HCC's repair and maintenance projects, such as the recently contracted rooftop terrace deck repair project, are partially funded by tax-exempt G.O. bonds. Allowing the leasing of naming rights for HCC could jeopardize the tax-exempt status of these bonds.

Mahalo for the opportunity to share our comments.



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

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JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
House Committee on Labor

Tuesday, February 3, 2026
9:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of
HB1609
RELATING TO STATE FACILITIES

Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee and members of the Committee.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports HB1609 which allows the naming rights of the Stadium Facility and Convention Center Facility to be leased to any public or private entity, requires any revenues derived from advertising or marketing in/on the facilities to be deposited into the appropriate special fund of the facility, authorizes the display of the name of any entity that leased the naming rights to a stadium operated by the Stadium Authority on the exterior of the stadium, and exempts concessions within the facilities.

DBEDT is supportive of creating additional revenue opportunities for the stadium and convention center, so long as it is with authorization of the Stadium Authority or the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and is within the guardrails outlined in the measure. In addition to providing revenue that could contribute to higher-quality facilities, thoughtfully designed marketing can also positively contribute to the branding of the events and the overall entertainment experience for attendees. The increased flexibility could also provide opportunities for public service announcements, community messaging and promotion of upcoming events.

Thank you for the opportunity to support this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DBEDT DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DBEDT DEPUTY DIRECTOR

WALTER THOEMMES
CHAIR, STADIUM AUTHORITY

MICHAEL R. YADAO
INTERIM STADIUM MANAGER



Statement of
MICHAEL R. YADAO
Stadium Authority
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR

Tuesday, February 03, 2026
09:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of
H.B. 1609
RELATING TO STATE FACILITIES.

Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee and members of the Committee.

The Stadium Authority supports House Bill 1609, which allows the naming rights of any state-owned facility to be leased to any public or private entity. The ability to lease naming rights to the new Aloha Stadium will provide the Stadium Authority and/or Aloha Halawa District Partners, the entity the Stadium Authority intends to contract to operate and maintain the new Aloha Stadium, another revenue source to manage and operate the stadium. The Stadium Authority also recognizes that the Legislature has already provided a portion of the funding necessary to develop a globally competitive sports and entertainment facility and has consistently emphasized that the broader Stadium District should be realized through parallel residential and commercial development that strengthens long-term economic activity and supports the stadium's sustainability. Naming rights are a standard revenue tool that can help reduce ongoing reliance on public support while the Stadium District is built out. While it is my understanding the Stadium Authority currently has the authority to lease the naming rights to its stadium pursuant to HRS Section 109-2 Subsection (4), this bill specifically states such ability for state-owned facilities.

In addition, the Legislature has asked the Stadium Authority to explore other funding options and revenue strategies to finance the project and sustain long-term operations and maintenance of the Stadium District. Allowing naming rights is a widely used approach across major venues nationwide and is one practical option to help generate predictable, contract-based revenue.

By way of market context, venue naming-rights agreements commonly generate multi-million dollars annually, with value driven by venue profile, event volume, media exposure, and surrounding district activity. For example, SoFi Stadium has been reported at more than \$30 million per year over a long-term term, and the former Staples Center naming rights agreement rebranded as Crypto.com Arena has been reported at \$700 million over 20 years (about \$35 million per year). More typical NFL venue naming-rights agreements can fall in the single-digit millions per year. For example, Reuters reported a recent NFL stadium naming-rights agreement at over \$8 million annually. Across U.S. sports more broadly, one recent compilation reported an average naming-rights value of about \$7.4 million per year, while noting that a relatively small number of very large agreements account for a significant share of total value.

Furthermore, this bill requires any revenues derived from advertising or marketing in or on any state-owned facility to be deposited into the appropriate special fund of the state agency that owns the facility. HRS Section 109 3.5 established the stadium development special fund in which such revenues will be deposited. Any naming-rights revenue would ultimately support stadium operations and maintenance, either through deposit to the Stadium Development Special Fund as contemplated by statute, and/or through the stadium development and operations agreement structure under which the operator applies those receipts to O&M responsibilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER



SETH S. COLBY, Ph.D.
ACTING DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAI'I
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY SETH S. COLBY
ACTING DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON LABOR
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 1609

**February 3, 2026
9:30 a.m.
Room 309 and Videoconference**

RELATING TO STATE FACILITIES

The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill No. 1609 allows the naming rights of the Stadium and the Convention Center (CC) to be leased to any public or private entity; exempts concessions within the Stadium and the CC from Chapter 102, HRS; requires all revenues derived from advertising or marketing in or on the Stadium or the CC to be deposited into the appropriate special fund for either facility; and amends the allowable sources of revenues of the respective special funds to include the revenues derived from the leasing of naming rights of the facilities.

B&F has serious concerns that payments for naming rights for improvements financed by tax-exempt bonds will be considered private business use under the Internal Revenue Code. Federal tax law imposes restrictions on the private use of the proceeds of tax-exempt bonds and on the capital improvement program (CIP) projects financed with such proceeds. Failure to comply with federal rules on the private use of bond proceeds and bond-financed property could jeopardize the tax-exempt status of

the bonds, resulting in significant adverse consequences to bondholders or forcing the State to incur costly measures to remediate the tax law violations.

The construction of the new Stadium will be financed with taxable bonds and no issues related to private-use activity are anticipated at this time; however, the original construction of the CC and any subsequent CIP projects for the CC may have been partially financed with tax-exempt bonds. As such, the tax-exempt status of those bonds could be jeopardized if the Hawai'i Tourism Authority is allowed to lease the naming rights for the CC.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

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Keeping Hawai‘i clean,
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February 1st, 2026

RE: The Outdoor Circle COMPLETE OPPOSITION to HB1609 (Related to State Facilities)
“Naming Rights” and request that you do not advance this measure

Dear Committee Chair Sayama and Labor Committee Members,

The Outdoor Circle stands with the overwhelming majority of Hawai‘i residents in opposition to House Bill 1609. Whether in the form of “sponsorships” or “naming rights” or similar arrangements, we must reject any efforts to weaken our historic laws that have vigilantly guarded Hawai‘i for over a century, safeguarding our landscapes and public facilities from over-commercialization.

Hawai‘i is not just a collection of public facilities – it is a living cultural landscape shaped by history, language, and a shared commitment to protecting what makes our islands distinct. For more than a century, Hawai‘i has chosen restraint over commercialization in its public spaces, understanding that some things should not be for sale. HB1609 drastically departs from that legacy in ways that raise serious legal, financial, and cultural concerns.

Summary of Opposition to HB1609

HB1609 should be rejected because it:

- Breaks with a century of settled public policy by creating a precedent-setting exception allowing corporate naming rights on state-owned facilities.
- Authorizes exterior display of corporate names, conflicting with the spirit and purpose of Hawai‘i’s anti-billboard and off-site advertising laws.
- Exempts concessions from procurement law while establishing no procurement standards for naming-rights agreements, creating a substantial risk of non-transparent and non-competitive use of public assets.
- Exposes the State to significant financial risk by potentially jeopardizing the tax-exempt status of bond-financed facilities, as previously warned by the Department of Budget and Finance.
- Commodifies the names and identities of public places without public process, cultural review, or meaningful community consent.

We ask that you reject HB1609 entirely and do not allow it to advance.

HB1609 would not just affect today—it would set a dangerous precedent. Once the Legislature creates an explicit statutory exception allowing corporate naming rights on state-owned facilities, there is no principled legal basis to deny similar exemptions for other public facilities, agencies, or publicly owned lands in the future. HB1609 therefore functions not as a one-off authorization, but as a precedent-setting erosion of Hawai‘i’s long-standing protections against commercial intrusion into public space.

HB1609 is not limited to symbolic recognition or philanthropic acknowledgment. As written, it authorizes commercial leasing of naming rights to public facilities, allows the exterior display of those names, and fails to establish standard public oversight mechanisms. These are substantive and profound policy changes, not technical adjustments.

HB1609 jeopardizes Hawai‘i’s long-standing and widely respected signage laws. HB1609 would sacrifice these benefits by elevating private commercial interests at the expense of our communities and our public facilities and assets, undermining the very foundation of our collective environmental and economic prosperity. If HB1609 were allowed to pass, it would establish a dangerous statutory pathway for naming rights across Hawai‘i. This would also pave the way for visual blight and the erosion of cultural and historic identity in exchange for short-term commercial consideration.

HB1609 is the latest iteration of similar proposals that have repeatedly failed due in major part to overwhelming public opposition. It is with this rich history and collective understanding of laws that have long benefitted Hawai‘i’s residents and visitors that we must carefully consider what is at stake with HB1609 and its broader implications.

Hawai‘i has deliberately rejected revenue derived from billboards and other forms of off-site advertising, recognizing that short-term financial gain does not justify long-term harm to the public good. That policy choice has been repeatedly upheld by the courts and has become a defining feature of Hawai‘i’s identity and economic success. Residents value living in communities free from pervasive commercial signage, and visitors consistently cite Hawai‘i’s uncluttered landscapes and public spaces as central to the experience they seek. HB1609 would reverse this settled and successful policy judgment by introducing commercial naming rights into public space for the first time.

In the last two years, bills of similar natures were completely opposed by the public as well, for reasons that are the same in HB1609. Unlike traditional philanthropy, which supports public facilities without altering their identity, HB1609 authorizes the transfer of naming rights in exchange for corporate imprinting on public assets, effectively introducing off-site advertising into spaces held in trust for the public. Once public identities are treated as leasable commercial interests, they become intertwined with private entities whose reputations and circumstances may change over time, with no meaningful assurance of accountability, limits, or oversight. The bill provides no framework to ensure cultural integrity or community consent before these transfers occur, and it creates an enduring policy challenge by making it increasingly difficult to justify excluding other entities or messages the State may later find objectionable.

These concerns are not hypothetical or speculation. HB1609 creates new authority to lease naming rights, while leaving unresolved serious questions of transparency, accountability, and public oversight. HB1609 creates a substantial risk that naming-rights and related marketing agreements will be administered outside the safeguards of Hawai‘i’s public procurement law unless the Legislature explicitly provides otherwise.

HB1609 Undermines Native Hawaiian Language and Hawai‘i’s Cultural Identity

Hawaiian place names are not just words; they are the embodiment of history, language, and identity. Hawai‘i’s place names hold meaning—they tell stories of the lands, the ali‘i, the mo‘olelo, and Hawai‘i itself. Names are not just labels—they are the cultural fabric of our communities. What happens when corporations dictate the names of our most treasured public sites, replacing the Hawaiian language or local luminaries with a Corporate Identity?

We currently see that **Hawai‘i** names its public facilities and places now with in a way that honors our history, its peoples and environment, such as Queen Ka‘ahumanu Highway, Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana‘ole Freeway, Le‘ahi State Monument, Makapu‘u Lighthouse Trail, Akaka Falls, Aloha Stadium, Daniel K. Inouye Honolulu International Airport, Ellison Onizuka Kona

International Airport, and Queen Lili‘uokalani Gardens. *Now imagine any of those with “naming rights” of a corporation in front of it or replacing it, essentially branding and intertwining our publicly-held assets with its implicit State endorsement.*

A name needed for a public facility should reflect the place, history, or purpose of that facility. It should not be treated as a commercial asset subject to leasing, branding, or monetization. This may include honoring luminaries in Hawai‘i’s history, those who have contributed greatly to the welfare of the state, native plants, animals, or place names. Allowing a corporation or outside individual to purchase “naming rights” represents a fundamental departure from the values Hawai‘i has long applied to its public assets, including the principle that names should reflect history, culture, and sense of place. This concern applies especially to the use of the words “Hawai‘i” and “Aloha.”

HB1609 May Pose a Serious Financial Risk by Jeopardizing Tax-Exempt Bonds

From direct testimony by Department of Budget and Finance on SB 583 last year:

“B&F has serious concerns that payments for naming rights for improvements financed by tax-exempt bonds will be considered private business use under the Internal Revenue Code. Federal tax law imposes restrictions on the private use of the proceeds of tax-exempt bonds and on the capital improvement projects (CIP) financed with such proceeds. Tax-exempt bonds have been used to finance CIPs throughout the State. Failure to comply with federal rules on the private use of bond proceeds and bond-financed property could jeopardize the tax-exempt status of the bonds, resulting in significant adverse consequences to bondholders or forcing the State to incur costly measures to remediate the tax law violations.”

If tax-exempt status is lost:

- Borrowing costs might increase for future state projects.
- Taxpayers will bear the burden of covering financial shortfalls.
- The state could face legal action over violations of bond agreements.

How is HB1609 materially different and would it face the same financial concerns?

HB1609 Violates Hawai‘i’s Revered Anti-Billboard Laws

Hawai‘i’s anti-billboard law (HRS § 445-111) explicitly states:

“No person shall erect, maintain, or use a billboard or any other outdoor advertising device.”

Naming rights displayed on the exterior of public facilities function as off-site advertising and raise serious questions about consistency with this statute’s purpose and judicial interpretation.

Hawai‘i’s ban on off-site advertising is among the strictest and also the most respected in the United States, and has been repeatedly upheld in state and federal courts. The intent of our laws is clear: to protect our state’s scenic beauty and public spaces from being overtaken by commercial interests. This proposed bill would invite legal challenges and would weaken or destroy Hawai‘i’s strong legal precedent for protecting public visual spaces.

Public Opposition to Weakening These Laws is Clear and Enduring

Public opposition to proposals allowing naming rights or exemptions to Hawai‘i’s anti-billboard and off-site advertising laws has been consistent, broad-based, and sustained over multiple legislative sessions, over many decades. This opposition has been reflected in extensive public testimony in recent years, editorial commentary in the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* opposing any weakening of

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these protections, and a January 29, 2024 *Star-Advertiser* “Big Q” poll in which 83 percent of respondents rejected creating an exemption to Hawai‘i’s billboard ban. Taken together, these indicators demonstrate that the public is not asking for this policy change and does not support the direction proposed in HB1609.

The Betrayal of Public Investment – Selling What Taxpayers Already Own

State facilities are not private assets to be auctioned off—they are built and maintained by the people, for the people, with taxpayer dollars. The idea that a corporation can “lease” naming rights to a public facility raises serious public trust concerns. Our state has spent billions of dollars over generations to build infrastructure that serves the people. The sale of naming rights would hand over public asset identities to private interests.

As one testifier encapsulated perfectly last year: “Not everything should be up for sale...allowing advertising to assault us all everywhere...should not stand.”

HB1609 Is Unnecessary and Unjustified

HB1609 is not driven by necessity. Hawai‘i’s public facilities have long been supported through a combination of appropriations, traditional philanthropy, grants, and partnerships that do not require the transfer or commercialization of public identity. Public institutions across the State, including universities, parks, and cultural facilities, routinely receive financial support without surrendering their names, cultural meaning, or public character.

The existence of these long-established funding practices demonstrates that leasing naming rights is not required to sustain or improve public facilities. Rather, HB1609 represents a policy choice to monetize public identity, not a response to a lack of viable funding options. That choice would fundamentally alter the relationship between the public and the assets it collectively owns.

Financial support for public facilities should enhance the public good without imposing permanent or long-lasting commercial branding on spaces held in trust for the people of Hawai‘i. The fact that support can — and does — occur without such branding underscores that HB1609 is neither necessary nor appropriate.

There is no amendment that can “fix” this bill — it must be rejected outright in its entirety.

HB1609 represents a fundamental departure from Hawai‘i’s long-standing approach to protecting public space, public identity, and the public trust. It authorizes the commercialization of publicly owned facilities in ways that conflict with established signage laws, raise unresolved financial and governance concerns, and set a precedent with consequences well beyond the scope of this bill. For these reasons, HB1609 should be rejected outright.

Hawai‘i is not for sale.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



Winston Welch
Executive Director, The Outdoor Circle

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

HB-1609

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 9:55:40 AM
Testimony for LAB on 2/3/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
kaloa@stanfordcarr.com	Stanford Carr Development and Aloha Halawa District Partners	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

February 2, 2026

The Honorable Jackson D. Sayama, Chair

The Honorable Mike Lee, Vice Chair

and Members of the House Committee on Labor

Subject: Testimony: HB 1609, Relating to State Facilities

Hearing: February 3, 2026, at 9:30 AM, Conference Room 309

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Committee Members:

Stanford Carr Development on behalf of the Stadium Authority's selected developer for the New Aloha Stadium and Entertainment District (NASED) - Aloha Halawa District Partners, LLC (AHDP) - strongly supports HB 1609, along with a suggested amendment below, which would allow the naming rights of the Stadium Facility and Convention Center Facility to be leased to public or private entities, with all resulting revenues deposited into the appropriate special fund of each facility.

HB 1609 represents a responsible, market-based approach to maximizing the value of public assets while ensuring that proceeds directly benefit the facilities themselves. Naming rights are a

proven way to reduce reliance on taxpayer funding while supporting ongoing operations, maintenance, and capital improvements.

Across the United States, naming rights agreements generate significant and predictable revenue. For example, Citi Field, home of the New York Mets, reportedly generates nearly \$20 million annually through a long-term naming rights agreement, demonstrating the revenue potential of major venues. More recently, retail and national brands have entered similar agreements beyond traditional sports franchises, such as Philadelphia's Xfinity Mobile Arena.

Suggested Amendment

However, pursuant to its ongoing efforts to redevelop a new Aloha Stadium and a surrounding entertainment district, the Stadium Authority has entered into an agreement with Aloha Halawa District Partners, LLC for the demolition of the existing Aloha Stadium, and subsequent/on-going design, construction, operation, and management of the New Aloha Stadium. In order to fund the continued operation and maintenance of the New Aloha Stadium after completion and to avoid the deferred maintenance which led to the existing stadium's structural condemnation, the Stadium Authority's agreement with AHDP diverts all revenues derived from the Stadium to AHDP. We therefore suggest the bill be amended to allow for revenues to be deposited into the operator's capital improvement funds.

By authorizing naming rights, the State can unlock new non-tax revenue streams, enhance the long-term financial sustainability of these facilities, and reduce future pressure on public funds.

For these reasons, Stanford Carr Development respectfully urges the Committee to support House Bill 1609 with the aforementioned amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Stanford S. Carr



TESTIMONY OF DAVE ERDMAN, PRESIDENT & CEO
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
FEBRUARY 2, 2026
IN SUPPORT OF HB 1609 - RELATING TO STATE FACILITIES.

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dave Erdman, and I am the Interim President and CEO of Retail Merchants of Hawai'i, a statewide trade association representing retailers, shopping centers, and allied businesses across the islands.

Retail Merchants of Hawai'i supports HB1609.

Well-maintained, modern stadium and convention facilities are essential economic infrastructure for Hawai'i. These venues serve residents and visitors, host major events, and generate activity that supports retail, dining, lodging, and transportation throughout our communities.

Across the country, leading cities use paid naming rights and long-term lease agreements to help offset the high costs of facility maintenance, modernization, and development. Facilities such as Oracle Park, Chase Center, and SoFi Stadium demonstrate how these partnerships generate dedicated, predictable revenue streams that reduce reliance on public funds while keeping venues competitive and attractive.

Naming rights and lease revenues provide a practical funding tool that allows public facilities to remain top class, host world-class events, and adapt to changing market demands. These models also help ensure that the economic benefits of major venues extend beyond the facility itself to nearby businesses, employees, and neighborhoods.

For Hawai'i's retail community, strong, well-funded venues drive foot traffic, visitor spending, and year-round activity that supports local jobs and small businesses. Investing in sustainable funding mechanisms helps protect these benefits for both residents and visitors.

For these reasons, Retail Merchants of Hawai'i respectfully supports HB1609.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Erdman
Interim President and CEO
Retail Merchants of Hawaii





February 2, 2026

The Honorable Jackson D. Sayama, Chair
The Honorable Mike Lee, Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Labor

Subject: Testimony: HB 1609, Relating to State Facilities
Hearing: February 3, 2026, at 9:30 AM, Conference Room 309

Dear Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, and Committee Members:

Stanford Carr Development supports the intent of HB 1609, which would allow the naming rights of the Stadium Facility and Convention Center Facility to be leased to public or private entities, with all resulting revenues deposited into the appropriate special fund of each facility.

HB 1609 represents a responsible, market-based approach to maximizing the value of public assets while ensuring that proceeds directly benefit the facilities themselves. Naming rights are a proven way to reduce reliance on taxpayer funding while supporting ongoing operations, maintenance, and capital improvements.

Across the United States, naming rights agreements generate significant and predictable revenue. For example, Citi Field, home of the New York Mets, reportedly generates nearly \$20 million annually through a long-term naming rights agreement, demonstrating the revenue potential of major venues. More recently, retail and national brands have entered similar agreements beyond traditional sports franchises, such as Philadelphia's Xfinity Mobile Arena.

However, pursuant to its ongoing efforts to redevelop a new Aloha Stadium and a surrounding entertainment district, the Stadium Authority has entered into an agreement with Aloha Halawa District Parters, LLC for the demolition of the existing Aloha Stadium, and subsequent/on-going design, construction, operation, and management of the New Aloha Stadium. In order to fund the continued operation and maintenance of the New Aloha Stadium after completion and to avoid the deferred maintenance which led to the existing stadium's structural condemnation, the Stadium Authority's agreement with AHDP diverts all revenues derived from the Stadium to AHDP. We therefore **suggest the bill be amended** to allow for revenues to be deposited into the operator's capital improvement fund.

The Honorable Jackson D. Sayama, Chair
The Honorable Mike Lee, Vice Chair
and Members of the House Committee on Labor
Page 2

February 2, 2026

By authorizing naming rights, the State can unlock new non-tax revenue streams, enhance the long-term financial sustainability of these facilities, and reduce future pressure on public funds—all while maintaining public ownership and oversight.

For these reasons, Stanford Carr Development respectfully urges the Committee to amend HB 1609 as suggested.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,



Stanford S. Carr

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

HB-1609

Submitted on: 2/3/2026 2:28:47 AM
Testimony for LAB on 2/3/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Angela Young	CARES Community Advocacy Research Education Services	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Strong support.



February 3, 2026

Members of the House Labor Committee

Hawaii State Capitol
415 South Beretania Street
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Committee Chair Sayama and Labor Committee Members:

As president of Scenic America — the nation's only 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated solely to preserving and promoting America's scenic beauty — I urge you to vote against House Bill 1609. This bill would, for the first time, authorize commercial outdoor advertising devices on the exterior of buildings in Hawaii. That change represents a fundamental departure from the state's longstanding outdoor advertising prohibition.

For more than 40 years, Scenic America has championed policies that protect and enhance the beauty and character of our communities and the great outdoors. A key focus of our work is establishing clear limits on the spread of outdoor billboard advertising. We take this mission seriously — in one instance pursuing a case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where we prevailed.

Hawaii is one of four states that have completely banned outdoor advertising. Its longstanding ban on outdoor advertising is a courageous stance against shortsighted commercialism — a stance that recognizes the astounding value of the state's natural beauty and the importance of smoothly integrating its urban settings with its pristine landscapes. The ban acknowledges that the state's aesthetics do so much more to promote the health and vitality of its citizens, its unique culture, and even its economy than outdoor advertising could ever hope to contribute.

If Hawaii were to open the door to any outdoor advertising, it would become extraordinarily difficult to close. In 1927, Hawaii passed legislation to protect its neighborhoods, its night sky, and its public realm. Passing this legislation would move the state in the opposite direction — and not because residents asked for it.

Please consider the following fact-based assertions regarding the impacts of outdoor advertising:

- **Environmental Degradation:** Outdoor advertising that is illuminated or digital threatens economic growth by negatively impacting Hawaii's biggest drivers: nature and ecotourism. Once exterior commercial advertising is authorized, pressure to illuminate or

digitize those displays inevitably follows. Outdoor advertising with internal or external lighting mechanisms and LED screens contribute to high levels of light pollution, disrupting human circadian rhythms and interfering with nocturnal animals' migration, movement, communication, hunting, and foraging. For humans, this can lead to sleep disruption, cancer, obesity, depression, mental disorders, and Alzheimer's disease. Wildlife most affected by this includes birds that migrate by night, disoriented by artificial lighting; butterflies and moths whose navigation and pollination patterns are thrown off by glare; and nocturnal animals such as owls, foxes, flying squirrels, and fireflies — all of which depend on darkness for survival. Research has shown that even low levels of light pollution — far below the intensity of digital billboards — can negatively affect biodiversity and many species' survival prospects.

- **Economic and Social Costs:** Tourism has been shown to increase in cities and states that have banned billboards, as community beautification attracts visitors and stimulates local growth. People do not visit or live in Hawaii because they want a sign-infested urban environment.
- **Driver and Pedestrian Safety:** Numerous geospatial and neuroscience studies have shown that billboards create distractions for drivers and contribute to traffic accidents. A 2020 review of 27 independent studies found that outdoor advertising signs are designed specifically to grab drivers' attention and divert it away from the roadway, increasing distraction from both the road and pedestrians. This effect was found to be especially hazardous under challenging driving conditions such as inclement weather, complex road layouts, high speeds, sudden traffic shifts, and the presence of visually striking signage. Roads and communities without these distractions are safer and more secure for all residents and visitors.
- **Aesthetics and Community Character:** Billboard proliferation immediately degrades the visual character of surrounding landscapes. Large digital displays adjacent to roadways dominate the scene and distract from the natural beauty of their surroundings. Restricting billboards fosters a cleaner visual environment and enhances residents' and visitors' appreciation of cultural and natural assets.

At Scenic America, we have concluded — based on robust research — that adding billboards benefits only the advertising companies that own them, while undermining the well-being and character of the communities that permit them. We respectfully urge the committee to reject House Bill 1609 and preserve Hawaii's nationally and internationally admired prohibition on outdoor advertising.

If you have any questions or would like any additional information, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly at mark.falzone@scenic.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Falzone".

Mark Falzone
President, Scenic America

HB-1609

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 11:16:31 AM
Testimony for LAB on 2/3/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jack O'Neill	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My name is Jack O'Neill, and I strongly oppose HB1609.

In Hawaiian culture, names carry meaning and history. They honor ancestors, reflect identity, and connect us to the land. Leasing the naming rights of Aloha Stadium or the Convention Center with a paid advertisement disrespects this cultural significance and diminishes the public character of these spaces.

These facilities are public venues built and maintained with taxpayer dollars. They are not private assets meant to be marketed to the highest bidder. Leasing naming rights sets a dangerous precedent and invites further commercialization of public property.

HB1609 also weakens our anti-billboard and signage protections by creating special exceptions for advertising. We are proud and responsible to protect our scenic beauty; this bill moves us in the wrong direction.

Last year, similar legislation faced overwhelming public opposition. That message has not changed. The people do not want corporate branding imposed on our shared public spaces.

Mahalo,
Jack O'Neill

LATE *Testimony submitted late may not be considered by the Committee for decision making purposes.

HB-1609

Submitted on: 2/2/2026 6:09:51 PM
Testimony for LAB on 2/3/2026 9:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Beverley Brand	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Sayama, Vice Chair Lee, Committee Members

I strongly oppose 1609 as do an overwhelming majority of the public- please kill this bill!