
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that established ocean
2 industries, including shipping and fishing, have evolved into
3 innovation-driven sectors such as ocean technology, marine
4 robotics, offshore energy, and ocean data systems. The World
5 Bank defines the "blue economy" as the sustainable use of ocean
6 resources to support economic growth, improve livelihoods, and
7 create jobs, while maintaining the long-term health of ocean
8 ecosystems.

9 The legislature further finds that the blue economy
10 represents one of the fastest-growing economic opportunities
11 globally, encompassing industries such as marine construction,
12 ship and boat building, marine transportation, energy, tourism
13 and recreation, fisheries and fishery-related businesses,
14 aquaculture, marine biotechnology, ocean and coastal management,
15 and conservation. The blue economy is projected to double in
16 value to an estimated \$3,000,000,000,000 by 2030, with growth
17 increasingly driven by technological innovation.



1 The legislature also finds that Hawaii is uniquely
2 positioned to be a nationally competitive leader in the blue
3 economy. Located at the center of the Pacific Ocean, Hawaii
4 serves as a strategic crossroads for ocean-based industries,
5 research, and innovation, building upon the longstanding
6 knowledge and stewardship Native Hawaiians have maintained with
7 the ocean.

8 However, the legislature finds that, to remain competitive
9 with other coastal states and international regions, the State
10 must modernize its approach and more strategically leverage its
11 technological, infrastructure, and manufacturing capabilities,
12 including marine biotechnology, autonomous maritime systems,
13 maritime cybersecurity, shipping, ports and harbors, and ocean
14 data and observation systems.

15 The legislature additionally finds that numerous states,
16 including Alaska, California, Connecticut, Florida, Maine,
17 Michigan, Mississippi, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington,
18 have advanced their participation in the blue economy through
19 strategic initiatives, legislation, and the development of ocean
20 technology hubs.



1 The legislature further finds that the Hawaii technology
2 development corporation, as the state agency supporting
3 technology development and commercialization, is an appropriate
4 entity to coordinate efforts to advance the blue economy. The
5 Hawaii technology development corporation has existing
6 relationships across public, private, academic, and federal
7 partners and has the capacity to support strategy development,
8 facilitate access to capital, support workforce development, and
9 advance the commercialization of ocean-related technologies.

10 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to require the
11 Hawaii technology development corporation to contract for the
12 services of a consultant with technical expertise to support the
13 development, coordination, and implementation of the State's
14 blue economy strategy, including activities related to maritime,
15 aquaculture, coastal resiliency, and ocean observation and
16 sensing technologies, and appropriate funds for this purpose.

17 SECTION 2. (a) The Hawaii technology development
18 corporation shall contract for the services of a consultant to
19 support the development, coordination, and implementation of
20 ocean technology and innovation initiatives.



4 (1) Developing a statewide blue economy and ocean
5 technology and innovation strategy that supports the
6 State's broader blue economy objectives and provides a
7 clear vision, implementation roadmap with milestones,
8 defined stakeholder roles, and actionable
9 implementation steps;

10 (2) Coordinating cross-agency collaboration with missions
11 that intersect with the blue economy, including but
12 not limited to the department of business, economic
13 development, and tourism; department of land and
14 natural resources; department of transportation;
15 department of agriculture; Hawaii emergency management
16 agency; office of Hawaiian affairs; university of
17 Hawaii; natural energy laboratory of Hawaii authority;
18 and other relevant entities;

19 (3) Conducting research and analysis of ocean-related
20 industries, including regulatory and permitting
21 frameworks, capital needs, workforce requirements,



infrastructure gaps, innovative solutions, and opportunities for public-private partnerships and community engagement;

- (4) Pursuing public, private, and federal funding opportunities to support the development, deployment, and commercialization of ocean technology and innovation;
- (5) Recommending legislation and policy actions to strengthen Hawaii's competitiveness in the blue economy;
- (6) Providing technical, operational, and project management support to the corporation to accelerate the corporation's ocean innovation initiative during the interim period prior to the establishment of permanent staff and sustained resources;
- (7) Preparing and submitting an annual report to the legislature, in accordance with applicable statutory reporting requirements, detailing the activities, outcomes, and progress achieved under this contract;



11 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$500,000 or so much
13 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2026-2027 for the
14 Hawaii technology development corporation to procure the
15 services of a consultant to support the development,
16 coordination, and implementation of ocean technology and
17 innovation initiatives, pursuant to section 2 of this Act.

18 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii
19 technology development corporation for the purposes of this Act.

20 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2026.

21



H.B. NO. 1615

INTRODUCED BY:



JAN 16 2026



H.B. NO. 1615

Report Title:

Hawaii Technology and Development Corporation; Blue Economy; Ocean Technology and Innovation; Consultant; Appropriation

Description:

Requires the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation to contract for the services of a consultant to support the development, coordination, and implementation of certain state ocean technology and innovation initiatives and appropriates funds for this purpose.

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