

MAR 10 2026

SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND
TOURISM TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON HAWAII'S FOOD MANUFACTURING
STRENGTHS AND STRATEGIC MARKETS.

1 WHEREAS, Hawaii's economy relies on small businesses, which
2 account for 99.3 percent of businesses and 49.3 percent of
3 employees across the State; and
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5 WHEREAS, a report on small businesses by the Economic
6 Research Organization at the University of Hawaii recommended
7 that the State create centralized networking systems to help
8 small businesses build connections and collaborate on projects;
9 launch initiatives in partnership with educational institutions
10 for technical skills, training, leadership development, and
11 employee retention strategies; and foster small business growth
12 and sustainability by implementing policies from comparable
13 cities, including business incubators, innovation hubs, and
14 public-private partnerships; and
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16 WHEREAS, Act 237, Session Laws of Hawaii 2025, established
17 the food and product innovation network, a statewide network of
18 open-access food and value-added product development facilities
19 to enable businesses to scale up new products, by supporting
20 research and development, manufacturing, and commercialization;
21 and
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23 WHEREAS, the food and product innovation network is modeled
24 on New Zealand's public-private innovation network, which
25 includes food innovation hubs that are strategically located and
26 coordinated nationally to deliver complementary services across
27 the nation; and
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29 WHEREAS, similar to Hawaii, Singapore faces severe
30 geographic and agricultural land constraints and has
31 strategically shifted its food innovation focus toward
32 developing high-value, technology-driven food products and
33 premium exports, recognizing that traditional volume-based
34 agriculture is not economically viable in a resource-scarce
35 environment; and



1 WHEREAS, shared-use scaling facilities, such as Singapore's
2 FoodPlant, provide critical insight into how the State can
3 utilize small-batch production infrastructure to mitigate
4 prohibitive initial capital costs, thereby enabling businesses
5 to systematically engineer products specifically for high-
6 margin, premium consumer markets; and
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8 WHEREAS, Hawaii's ability to compete in global markets
9 depends on its capacity to use similar coordinated and strategic
10 planning to refine processes, scale production, and manufacture
11 high-value, export-ready ingredients and goods; and
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13 WHEREAS, the State's food and product innovation network
14 uniquely integrates entrepreneurial education, workforce
15 development, agricultural production, and value-added innovation
16 into one coordinated system; and
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18 WHEREAS, the successful implementation and growth of the
19 food and product innovation network requires further examination
20 of Hawaii's food manufacturing strengths and the identification
21 of strategic markets for local high-value, premium products;
22 now, therefore,
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24 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-third
25 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2026,
26 that the Department of Business, Economic Development, and
27 Tourism is requested to conduct a study on Hawaii's food
28 manufacturing strengths and strategic markets, including an
29 assessment of the competitive advantages of Hawaii-made products
30 and the specific high-value, premium products that the State
31 should focus on manufacturing for export; and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, as part of the study, the
34 Department is requested to establish clear economic metrics
35 defining what qualifies as a high-value product and to identify
36 specific markets matching those metrics with specific product
37 categories that possess the highest probability of export
38 success; and
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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department is requested to
41 include in the study a comprehensive cost-of-production
42 analysis, factoring in Hawaii's high operational costs,



1 including energy, labor, and imported ingredients, to
2 mathematically determine the minimum profit margins required to
3 make local food manufacturing economically viable; and
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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department is requested to
6 assess any logistical or transportation barriers that currently
7 prevent entry into identified strategic markets and to propose
8 state-level solutions; and
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10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the University of Hawaii is
11 requested to use the findings of the study to update the
12 curriculum at the Maui Food Innovation Center and Wahiawa Value-
13 Added Product Development Center to ensure that local
14 entrepreneurs are taught to engineer products specifically for
15 high-value, export-oriented markets from the very beginning; and
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17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Business,
18 Economic Development, and Tourism is requested to collaborate
19 with the Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity, Agribusiness
20 Development Corporation and its innovation centers, and the
21 University of Hawaii to ensure that the results of the study are
22 integrated into existing workforce development and business
23 incubation programs; and
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25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Agribusiness Development
26 Corporation is requested to utilize the findings of the study to
27 guide the development and operation of its next-phase scaling
28 facilities, ensuring that businesses developed through
29 University of Hawaii programs are supported with the necessary
30 infrastructure to manufacture high-value products and achieve
31 sustainable economic growth; and
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33 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, based on the study's findings,
34 the Agribusiness Development Corporation and University of
35 Hawaii are requested to collaborate to instill market discipline
36 early in the food and product innovation network process,
37 teaching entrepreneurs which products are high-value and viable
38 for export; and
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40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Business,
41 Economic Development, and Tourism is requested to propose policy
42 recommendations on how the State can realign and prioritize



1 existing economic development resources, grants, and funding
2 mechanisms to specifically support businesses that manufacture
3 the identified high-value, premium products; and
4

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
6 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Business, Economic
7 Development, and Tourism; Director of Agriculture and
8 Biosecurity; President of the University of Hawaii; Chairperson
9 of the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development
10 Corporation; Executive Director of the Agribusiness Development
11 Corporation; Director of the Maui Food Innovation Center; and
12 Director of the Wahiawa Value-Added Product Development Center.
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OFFERED BY:



