

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**WENDY L. GADY**  
Executive Director

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
235 S. Beretania Street, Room 205  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
Phone: (808) 586-0186 Fax: (808) 586-0189

**TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND  
TOURISM**

March 3, 2026  
1:00 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

**GM607 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of  
Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation as the Director,  
Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.**

Chairperson DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to offer my strong support for the consideration and confirmation of Mr. Jayson Watts for appointment as a member of the Board of Directors for the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Over the past nine months, Mr. Watts has demonstrated steady, principled, and forward-thinking leadership while serving as Board Chair. During this time, he has guided the Board with a clear emphasis on governance, accountability, and strategic alignment with the Corporation's statutory mission. Most notably, Mr. Watts has played a pivotal leadership role in advancing the Corporation's strategic plan. Under his direction, the Board prioritized inclusive and informed planning by traveling to neighboring counties to engage directly with stakeholders. These outreach efforts ensured that farmers, ranchers,

agricultural businesses, and community partners had a meaningful voice in shaping the Corporation's long-term direction. This commitment to stakeholder engagement strengthened both the credibility and practical relevance of the strategic plan.

Mr. Watts has also consistently emphasized that Board decisions must be grounded in statute. His disciplined approach ensures that policies, project approvals, and strategic initiatives are carefully measured against the Corporation's legal mandate. This focus has reinforced responsible governance, transparency in decision-making, and long-term institutional integrity.

In addition, Mr. Watts has made transparency and public relations a priority, recognizing the importance of sharing the Corporation's accomplishments with the broader community. He has supported efforts to better communicate the positive impact of the Corporation's work, ensuring that stakeholders and the public understand how its programs strengthen agriculture, support local producers, and contribute to economic development. By elevating communication and public engagement, he has helped build trust and confidence in the Corporation's mission and outcomes.

His collaborative leadership style, commitment to transparency, and strategic mindset make him exceptionally well-qualified to continue serving in this capacity. I am confident that his continued service will provide stability, clarity, and forward momentum for the Corporation.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your favorable consideration and confirmation of Mr. Jayson Watts' appointment.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
DIRECTOR

**DANE K. WICKER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804  
Web site: [dbedt.hawaii.gov](http://dbedt.hawaii.gov)

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Fax: (808) 586-2377

Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
**Director**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

Tuesday, March 3, 2026  
1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

**GM 607**  
**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the**  
**Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee,**  
**JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to support GM607, appointing Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

During his tenure, Mr. Watts has demonstrated a firm commitment to strengthening board governance by fostering active participation among board members and ensuring that decisions are informed, deliberate, and mission focused. He has consistently emphasized that effective governance depends on the engagement of the full board, encouraging thoughtful discussion, diverse perspectives, and shared responsibility in decision-making.

One of the most valuable contributions Mr. Watts has made is his emphasis on the use of informational briefings to keep board members well informed. By supporting structured briefings on key operational, financial, and strategic matters, he has helped ensure that directors have the information necessary to exercise sound judgment. This proactive approach has elevated the quality of board deliberations and reinforced confidence in the decisions made.

Mr. Watts understands that strong governance is rooted in preparation and process. His support for regular updates and clear communication between staff and the Board has strengthened transparency and alignment with ADC's statutory responsibilities. Through

DBEDT Testimony

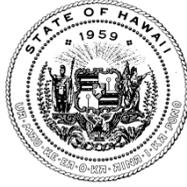
GM607

Page 2 of 2

these efforts, he has helped create a culture where decisions are grounded in facts, aligned with policy, and reflective of the Corporation's long-term objectives. His collaborative leadership style and commitment to informed decision-making have been instrumental in enhancing the Board's effectiveness. I am confident that his continued service will further strengthen ADC's governance and its ability to advance Hawai'i's agricultural and economic development goals.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge your favorable consideration of GM607 and the appointment of Jayson Watts to the Agribusiness Development Corporation Board of Directors.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



EDWIN H. SNIFFEN  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors  
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele  
DREANALEE K. KALILI  
TAMMY L. LEE  
CURT T. OTAGURO  
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

**LATE**

STATE OF HAWAI'I | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

March 3, 2026  
1:00 P.M.  
State Capitol, Room 229

**G.M. 607**

**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.**

Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

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The Department of Transportation (DOT) **supports** the appointment and confirmation of Jayson M. Watts to serve on the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Mr. Watts currently serves as Director of Environmental Health and Safety at Mahi Pono, LLC, overseeing programs for a 41,000-acre diversified agricultural operation on Maui with more than 600 employees. He is responsible for regulatory compliance, risk management, and environmental stewardship across large-scale agricultural operations. He also oversees a 100-acre community farm that supports local residents and emerging agricultural enterprises.

In addition to his private-sector leadership, Mr. Watts brings significant public policy experience, including service as Special Assistant to the Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and as Senior Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor, where he helped advance the 'Āina Pono Farm to School Program .

His combined experience in agriculture, regulatory compliance, public policy, and community engagement makes him exceptionally well-qualified to serve on the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 03/03/2026  
**Time:** 01:00 PM  
**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference  
**Committee:** EDT

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** GM607, SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAYSON WATTS, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the reappointment of Jayson M. Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). Mr. Watts manages compliance and safety for a 41,000-acre farming operation and has experience working with federal and state regulatory requirements, including those of the USDA, FDA, and EPA. His background is relevant to the ADC's efforts to strengthen Hawaii's agricultural infrastructure.

The Department recognizes that Mr. Watts' commitment to transitioning former plantation lands into a diversified agricultural system is vital for the long-term food security of Hawaii's students. His focus on workforce development and the creation of shared regional infrastructure, such as distribution hubs and research centers, helps lower the barriers for the next generation of local farmers. His disciplined approach to ensuring projects move forward "on time and on target" provides the stability necessary to grow a resilient food system for the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of GM 607.

Council Chair  
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair  
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Councilmembers  
K. Kauano'e Batangan  
Tom Cook  
Gabe Johnson  
Tamara Paltin  
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez  
Shane M. Sinenci  
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services  
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services  
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

**COUNTY COUNCIL**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

March 1, 2026

TO: Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

FROM: Nohelani U'u-Hodgins *Nohelani U'u-Hodgins*  
Councilmember

DATE: Tuesday, March 3, 2026  
1:00 p.m., Conference Room 229

SUBJECT: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 607, SUBMITTING FOR  
CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS OF THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION,  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAYSON WATTS**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of Mr. Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). I am submitting this testimony in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council.

As current Chairperson, Mr. Watts has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to transitioning Hawai'i's former plantation lands towards a sustainable, diversified agricultural future. He brings a unique combination of experience in large-scale agricultural operations and deep knowledge of state government.

Mr. Watts has been instrumental in leading the corporation through a critical period of reform and transition, implementing stronger governance practices to ensure the organization operates with transparency, discipline, and accountability. He has also driven the development of the 2026 Hawai'i Agribusiness Plan, which provides a strategic blueprint with clear direction and establishes measurable impacts for the state's agricultural future. His leadership has sharpened the ADC's strategic focus and reinforced a disciplined, results-oriented approach to moving projects forward on time and on target.

March 1, 2026

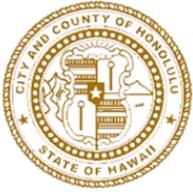
Page 2

In addition, Mr. Watts has maintained a sharp focus on operational execution, prioritizing critical infrastructure projects, such as modernizing aging water delivery systems, to ensure timely and effective implementation.

His professional expertise in regulatory compliance, including OSHA, USDA, and EPA standards, ensures that ADC's strategic objectives remain both ambitious and executable. His proactive engagement with stakeholders reflects the leadership necessary to strengthen food security and support local farmers.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of his reappointment. His continued service will provide the consistency, expertise, and steady leadership necessary to advance Hawai'i's agribusiness future.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL**  
**KE KANIHELA O KE KALANA O HONOLULU**  
530 S. KING ST. STE. 202, HONOLULU, HI 96813

**TYLER DOS SANTOS-TAM**  
HONOLULU CITY COUNCIL  
DISTRICT 6  
TELEPHONE: (808) 768-5006  
FAX: (808) 768-1176  
EMAIL: tdossantos-tam@honolulu.gov

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

**LATE**

Senate Committee on Economic Development & Tourism  
Tuesday, March 6, 2026 at 1:00 PM  
**GM 607** Testimony in Support

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai & Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development & Tourism:

My name is Councilmember Tyler Dos Santos-Tam, and I have the privilege of representing parts of Urban Honolulu from Kalihi Valley to Kaka'ako on the Honolulu City Council. I am submitting testimony in **support of GM 607** the submission for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors for the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, Jayson Watts, for a term to expire 6-30-2029.

Since 2000 Jayson Watts has served Hawai'i in various roles. He began his public service journey in the office of Congresswoman Patsy T. Mink. He has continued to work to make positive change for the people of Hawai'i. In 2003, he began his state government career, in which he has served in a capacity of rolls. He is deeply knowledgeable regarding the legislative system and how to effectively engage with legislators, staff, and advocates. Following his time in the legislative branch, Jayson Watts spent five years in the administrative branch. Four of those years was as advisor to the lieutenant governor followed by one year as a special assistant to the Director of the Hawai'i State Department of Labor and Industrial Relations. One of his most notable projects was successfully moving the 'Āina Pono Hawai'i State Farm to School Program forward. This accomplishment was achieved through developing relationships with farmers, school staff, school leaders, and Department of Education Administration to ensure a \$108M food budget was utilized appropriately to achieve programmatic goals.

Through his work with the agricultural component of that role, he developed a deep understanding of farms, farming, and farmers and moved to the role of Director of External Affairs & Strategic Initiatives for the Mahi Pono, LLC, a 41,000 acre diversified agricultural company on Maui Island. Here Mr. Watts has been working to build a more sustainable Hawai'i, seeking to always put the 'āina first because that is where success rooted.

Jayson Watts will continue to serve our state with this dedication, and for these reasons, I support Mr. Jayson Watts for this term as a member of the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Aloha,

Tyler Dos Santos-Tam  
Councilmember, District 6  
Honolulu City Council

Council Chair  
Alice L. Lee

Vice-Chair  
Yuki Lei K. Sugimura

Councilmembers  
K. Kauano'e Batangan  
Tom Cook  
Gabe Johnson  
Tamara Paltin  
Keani N.W. Rawlins-Fernandez  
Shane M. Sinenci  
Nohelani U'u-Hodgins



Director of Council Services  
David M. Raatz, Jr., Esq.

Deputy Director of Council Services  
Richelle K. Kawasaki, Esq.

## COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 S. HIGH STREET  
WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793  
[www.MauiCounty.us](http://www.MauiCounty.us)

March 2, 2026

TO: Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

FROM: Thomas Cook  
Councilmember

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas Cook".

SUBJECT: **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 607, CONFIRMATION OF JAYSON WATTS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **strong support of Governor's Message 607**, submitting for consideration and confirmation Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), representing Maui County.

The Maui County Council has not had the opportunity to take a formal position on this gubernatorial nomination. Therefore, I am testifying in my capacity as an individual member of the Maui County Council and as Chair of its Water & Infrastructure Committee.

I support this confirmation for these reasons:

### **1. Leadership in agricultural infrastructure and water systems.**

The long-term viability of agriculture in Maui County is directly tied to reliable water delivery systems and functional agricultural infrastructure. As Chairperson of the ADC Board, Mr. Watts has prioritized modernizing aging water delivery infrastructure and advancing critical capital improvement projects that directly support farmers and ranchers. This focus aligns closely with the work of the Maui County Council's Water & Infrastructure Committee and the urgent needs of our agricultural communities, farmers, and those who depend on reliable water infrastructure.

**2. Commitment to transparency, accountability, and good governance.**

Mr. Watts has led the ADC through a period of organizational reform by strengthening governance practices, increasing transparency, and reinforcing fiscal and operational accountability. These reforms are necessary to restore and maintain public confidence in state agencies entrusted with managing large land and infrastructure assets.

**3. Relevant professional and public-sector experience.**

Mr. Watts brings a unique combination of private-sector experience in large-scale agricultural operations and public service at the state level. This dual perspective enables him to bridge policy goals with on-the-ground realities faced by farmers, lessees, and infrastructure operators across Maui County and the State of Hawai'i.

**4. Strategic vision for diversified agriculture and food security.**

Under Mr. Watts' leadership, the ADC has advanced long-term planning efforts that provide a strategic roadmap for transitioning former plantation lands toward a diversified, sustainable agricultural future. This vision supports local food production, economic resilience, and long-term food security for our communities.

For the foregoing reasons, I support the confirmation of Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation. Mahalo, for the opportunity to testify. If you have questions relating to this testimony, please contact my office by e-mail at [Thomas.Cook@mauicounty.us](mailto:Thomas.Cook@mauicounty.us) or by phone at (808) 270-7108.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

March 3, 2026

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

**TESTIMONY ON GM 607**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, gubernatorial nominee, JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
1:00 PM

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, 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 strongly supports the confirmation of Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.**

Mr. Watts currently serves as Chair of the ADC Board and has provided steady, thoughtful leadership throughout his tenure. His understanding of both the operational realities of agriculture and the broader policy landscape has strengthened the Board's oversight and strategic direction.

HFB has worked with Mr. Watts in multiple capacities over the years, including during his service as Senior Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Shan Tsutsui, as Special Assistant to the Director at the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and in his current role with Mahi Pono. We have consistently found him to be exceptionally qualified, dedicated, honest, and fair in addressing complex agricultural issues.

As an agricultural-based organization, HFB appreciates Mr. Watts' experience, support for all of agriculture, and commitment to addressing the many important agricultural issues facing Hawai'i's farming community. As the Senior Advisor to Lieutenant Governor Shan Tsutsui, Mr. Watts helped spearhead the 'Aina Pono Hawai'i State Farm to School Program which helped develop a pathway for including local produce and protein in school meals in Hawai'i. He assisted the DLIR Agriculture Workforce Advisory Board

during his tenure as the Special Assistant to the Director at DLIR. As Director of Environmental Health and Safety at Mahi Pono, Mr. Watts oversees environmental compliance, safety programs, and regulatory coordination for one of Hawai'i's largest diversified agricultural operations. His direct experience working within a large-scale agricultural enterprise provides practical insight that is invaluable to ADC's mission of supporting and developing agricultural lands and infrastructure.

Under his leadership as Chair, ADC has continued to play an important role in managing agricultural lands and supporting agribusiness development across the state. His reappointment would provide continuity and stability at a critical time for Hawai'i's agricultural industry.

Please accept our strong support for the confirmation and reappointment of Mr. Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.

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

**From:** Kekaha Agriculture Association

**Date:** March 3, 2026

**Subject:** Testimony in Support of GM 607, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to express my strong support for the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

I first got to know Jayson while working with him on the Aina Pono Farm to School program during his time on Lieutenant Governor Tsutsui's staff. Since then he has proved himself to be a consistent and knowledgeable advocate for local Agriculture.

In addition to the above, his experience working with state government makes him well-prepared to continue his service as an effective chair. His commitment to this challenging role demonstrates his dedication to the community and ADC, and I am confident that his continued leadership will be a valuable asset to the State of Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Joshua Uyehara

President of the Board of Directors

Kekaha Agriculture Association



1050 Bishop St. PMB 235 |  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
P: 808-533-1292 | e:  
[info@hawaiiifood.com](mailto:info@hawaiiifood.com)

**Executive Officers**

**Kit Okimoto**, Okimoto Corp., *Chair*  
**Jayson Watts**, Mahi Pono, *Vice Chair*  
**Jill Tamura**, Tamura Super Market, *Secretary/Treas.*  
**Lauren Zirbel**, HFIA, *President and Executive Director*  
**Paul Kosasa**, ABC Stores, *Advisor*  
**Toby Taniguchi**, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*  
**Joe Carter**, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, Odom, *Advisor*  
**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*  
**Gary Okimoto**, Safeway, *Advisor*  
**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 3, 2026

TIME: 1pm

RE: GM607 Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

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. We know that Jayson Watts has been an asset to the Agribusiness Development Corporation as a Board Member, and we are pleased to recommend him for another term. As Director of External Affairs and Strategic Initiatives at Mahi Pono Jayson has helped the farm make real progress on important goals to increase local food production. The food grown at Mahi Pono on Maui is not only meant for Hawaii consumers by also for Hawaii manufacturers, who can use it to create value added products. This in turn creates jobs and further integrates local agriculture into our local food systems and diversifies the local economy.

Jayson's commitment to local agriculture and food production is also evidenced by Mahi Pono's sponsorship of the Made in Hawaii Festival. Jayson has worked with the Festival to create this partnership that enables the Festival itself and empowers local manufacturers, many of which are using local agricultural products.

Jayson brings valuable first hand agriculture and business knowledge to this position. We urge the Committee to vote yes and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Email: [communications@ulupono.com](mailto:communications@ulupono.com)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
Tuesday, March 3, 2026 — 1:00 p.m.

**Ulupono Initiative supports GM 607, Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, Jayson Watts, for a Term to Expire 06-30-2029.**

Dear Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the Vice President of Government Affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy and clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

**Ulupono Initiative supports GM 607.** Ulupono is pleased to offer its strong support for the appointment of Jayson Watts to the Agribusiness Development Corporation. Jayson's career reflects a deep and sustained commitment to Hawai'i's agricultural future — from his leadership of the 'Aina Pono Hawai'i State Farm to School Program under the Lt. Governor's Office, to his current role overseeing a 41,000-acre diversified agricultural operation on Maui. His unique combination of hands-on agricultural management, regulatory expertise, and public policy experience makes him exceptionally well suited to advance the ADC's mission of strengthening Hawai'i's farming economy.

Jayson understands both the opportunities and challenges facing local agriculture, and we are confident he will be a tireless advocate for Hawai'i's farming community. We urge the committee's approval of his appointment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata  
Vice President of Government Affairs

*Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i*



**Testimony of Dave Erdman**

**Interim President & CEO**

**Retail Merchants of Hawaii**

**Date: March 2, 2026**

**Testimony in Strong Support of GM 607 – Confirmation of Jayson M. Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation**

Chair Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Glenn Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Retail Merchants of Hawai‘i (RMH), I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of Governor’s Message 607 confirming Jayson M. Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), representing Maui County, for a term to expire June 30, 2029.

Retail Merchants of Hawai‘i represents retailers, shopping centers, dining establishments in retail and shopping centers, and allied businesses statewide. We recognize that the strength of Hawai‘i’s agricultural sector is directly tied to the vitality of our broader economy — including food distribution, local manufacturing, retail supply chains, and export development. The leadership of the ADC is therefore critical to long-term economic resilience and food security.

Jayson brings exceptional qualifications to this role. As Director of Environmental Health and Safety at Mahi Pono, he oversees EHS programs for a 41,000-acre diversified agricultural operation employing more than 600 workers. His responsibilities include compliance with HIOSH, HDOA, HDOH, EPA, and USDA regulations, implementation of injury and illness prevention systems, chemical and pesticide safety oversight, and emergency preparedness planning. This hands-on operational experience ensures that policy decisions are grounded in real-world agricultural practice and regulatory discipline.

Equally important is his public-sector background. Through senior leadership roles within the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, and the Hawai‘i State Senate, Jayson has developed a deep understanding of legislative process, administrative rules, budgeting, and interagency coordination. He has successfully worked across branches of government and with federal partners, bringing a balanced and pragmatic approach to governance.

During his service on the ADC Board, including as Chair, Jayson has demonstrated a commitment to transparency, accountability, and strategic planning. His leadership supports the responsible transition of former plantation lands into productive agricultural use while prioritizing infrastructure improvements and long-term sustainability.

From the perspective of the business community, Jayson understands that agriculture does not operate in isolation. He is an active member of the Hawaii Pacific Export Council, where I had the privilege of working closely with him during my tenure as Chair. He has consistently supported efforts to help Hawai'i producers access new markets, strengthen value-added manufacturing, and grow export opportunities for local companies.

His board and community service further reflect his dedication to Hawai'i's economic future. He serves or has served in leadership roles with the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation, Maui County Farm Bureau, the Hawaii Food Industry Association, the University of Hawai'i Alumni Association, Alaska Airlines' Hawaii Community Advisory Board, and Maui United Way, among others. This breadth of engagement demonstrates both statewide perspective and deep Maui roots.

Following the Maui wildfires, Jayson was among those who stepped forward early to support impacted families and businesses, helping mobilize food and community assistance. That responsiveness, combined with long-term strategic thinking, is precisely the type of leadership Maui County and the State require as we continue rebuilding and strengthening our agricultural foundation.

Retail Merchants of Hawai'i respectfully urges the Committee to grant favorable consideration to GM 607 and confirm Jayson M. Watts to continue serving on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

Dave Erdman  
Interim President & CEO  
Retail Merchants of Hawai'i

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 9:05:19 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Ted Anderson	Testifying for Venture Physical Therapy LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Members of the Board,

I am writing to offer my strongest support and endorsement for Jayson Watts, representing his vital work with Mahi Pono. In an industry as demanding as agriculture, the health, safety, and well-being of the workforce must be the foundation upon which all other successes are built. Jayson has not only recognized this reality but has taken unprecedented, progressive action to guarantee it.

I want to specifically highlight Jayson’s recent pioneering efforts in workplace safety. He spearheaded the implementation of an **on-site OSHA First Aid program** at Mahi Pono. Remarkably, this initiative is the first of its kind in the state of Hawaii.

This achievement speaks volumes about Jayson's character and his professional vision for several reasons:

- **A Truly Progressive Mindset:** Implementing a state-first program requires navigating uncharted waters in logistics and regulations. Jayson’s willingness to push the envelope demonstrates a forward-thinking leadership style that the Hawaiian agricultural sector desperately needs.
- **Prioritizing Employee Care:** Agricultural labor is physically taxing. By bringing first aid directly to the site, Jayson has removed barriers to immediate care, sending a clear, tangible message to the workforce that their health is the company's absolute top priority.
- **A Champion of Preventive Action:** What makes Jayson a genuinely unique thinker in this space is his shift away from purely reactive safety measures. This program is designed to be preventive—catching minor issues before they become major injuries and fostering a culture of continuous safety awareness on the ground.

Jayson Watts is a rare innovator in agricultural safety and operations. He does not just accept the industry standard; he actively works to elevate it. His dedication to the people who work the land at Mahi Pono serves as a model that the rest of the state should look toward.

I strongly urge the Board to recognize and support Jayson's exceptional work, his unique perspective, and his ongoing contributions to Hawaii's agricultural community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Theodore Anderson



**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair**

**Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 1:00 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**RE: GM607 – Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation**

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

My name is Denise Yamaguchi. I serve as Executive Director of the Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation. I also serve as Vice Chair of the Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i (COCH) and as Chair of the 21st Century Agriculture Committee for COCH.

I am writing in strong support of the Governor's Message No. 607 (GM607) regarding the confirmation of Jayson M. Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agricultural Development Corporation.

Mr. Watts has played a key role in strengthening governance at ADC, advancing the 2026 Hawai'i Agribusiness Plan, and ensuring that the corporation operates with greater transparency, accountability, and measurable results. Under his leadership, the Board has emphasized disciplined execution — including modernization of aging irrigation systems, improved land management protocols, and a clearer strategic direction for the corporation's portfolio of agricultural lands and infrastructure.

These are not small matters. Hawai'i's agricultural future depends heavily on reliable water systems, responsible land stewardship, and long-term planning that aligns infrastructure with production goals. The work being done at ADC directly impacts farmers' ability to operate efficiently and competitively.

Professionally, Mr. Watts brings a rare blend of operational and legislative experience. As Director of Environmental Health and Safety for a 41,000-acre diversified farming operation employing more than 700 individuals, he oversees complex regulatory compliance across federal and state frameworks. That scale of responsibility requires both technical expertise and sound judgment.

His prior service in the Hawai'i State Senate and in the Office of the Lieutenant Governor further equips him to translate policy into practical, executable outcomes. At a time when Hawai'i's agriculture sector faces high production costs, labor shortages, and aging water infrastructure, that ability to bridge policy and operations is essential.



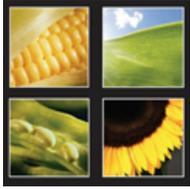
Mr. Watts has demonstrated the strategic discipline, operational expertise, and steady leadership necessary to continue moving ADC projects forward — on time and on target. His continued service will provide stability and momentum at a critical juncture for Hawai'i agriculture.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm Jayson M. Watts to the Board of ADC.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Respectfully,

Denise Yamaguchi  
Executive Director, Hawai'i Agricultural Foundation  
Vice Chair, Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i  
Chair, 21st Century Agriculture Committee, Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i



# HAWAII CROP IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

GM 607 – In Support  
Confirming Jayson Watts to the Agribusiness Development Corporation Board

Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026  
Time: 1:00 PM  
Place: Conference Room 229

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

The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association (HCIA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony **in support of GM 607**, which submits for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), Gubernatorial Nominee, Jayson Watts, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Mr. Watts brings a unique combination of executive-level public service experience, agricultural operations leadership, regulatory expertise, and community relationships that directly aligns with ADC's mission to diversify Hawaii's agricultural economy and ensure the productive use of agricultural lands. As the current Chair, he has served Hawaii well in his role and we strongly endorse his reappointment to the ADC Board.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.

*The Hawaii Crop Improvement Association is a Hawaii-based non-profit organization that promotes modern agriculture to help farmers and communities succeed. Through education, collaboration, and advocacy, we work to ensure a safe and sustainable food supply, support responsible farming practices, and build a healthy economy.*



Imanaka Asato  
A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW COMPANY

March 1, 2026

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Economic  
Development & Tourism  
Thirty-Third Legislature, Regular Session of 2026

**RE: Governor's Message No. 607 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029**

Hearing date: March 3, 2026, at 1:00 PM

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the committee,

Mahalo for allowing me to submit testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of GM 607 for confirmation of Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation ("ADC"). The agency was formed to help provide direction and facilitate the transition of Hawaii's agriculture business from primarily pineapple and sugar to a more diverse crop base.

Since 2019, Jayson has worked for Mahi Pono in Maui providing leadership and implementation of many of the objectives for which ADC was formed. Specifically, Jayson manages Mahi Pono's 100-acre community farm and agriculture park and occupational/Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) program helping to provide strategic direction for the long-term sustainability and improvements needed to help the farm thrive. He also ensures compliance with state and federal laws and regulations, and works with key county, state, and federal policymakers to make sure agriculture initiatives are fulfilled.

Since his appointment in 2023, Jayson has worked to implement governance reforms and develop a strategic blueprint for ADC to operate with transparency, discipline, and measurable impacts the community deserves. Jayson is committed to ensuring the success of ADC projects move. His firm commitment to public service and wealth of knowledge in agriculture and government operations in Hawaii are invaluable to ADC and will continue to support the growth, diversification, and resiliency of Hawaii's agriculture economy. For these reasons I urge you to confirm Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Michael L. Iosua

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:06:02 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mae Nakahata	Testifying for Maui County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The Maui County Farm Bureau supports tthe advise aand consent of Jayson Watts to the board of the Agribusinewss Development Corporation.



Testimony of  
**ALASKA AIRLINES and HAWAIIAN AIRLINES**

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

**Tuesday, March 3, 2026**  
**1:00 PM**  
**Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 229**

In consideration of  
**GM607**  
**SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAYSON WATTS, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029.**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the committee,

Alaska Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines write in strong support of the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

Jayson has provided steady, thoughtful leadership during an important chapter for Hawai'i's agricultural future. As Chair of the ADC Board, he has helped move the organization forward with greater clarity, stronger governance, and a sharper focus on execution. His leadership has not been theoretical. It has been grounded in real world farming experience, operational discipline, and a clear understanding of how policy decisions affect producers on the ground.

Beyond his service at ADC, Jayson is a member of our Hawai'i Community Advisory Board (HICAB), where he continues to be an invaluable resource to our companies. In that capacity, he consistently challenges us to think more intentionally about how we can support Hawai'i's agriculture industry and the communities we serve. He does not simply advocate in general terms. He identifies specific, practical areas where our operations, route networks, and partnerships can better serve local farmers and ranchers.

At the same time, Jayson keeps the everyday traveler front and center. He understands that agriculture, transportation, and affordability are connected. He frequently highlights opportunities for our companies to be helpful not only to producers moving goods, but also to local families and small businesses who rely on reliable air service.

As airlines that connect Hawai'i's islands and link our state to global markets, we see firsthand how critical strong agricultural infrastructure is to economic resilience and food security. Jayson understands those linkages. His background in large-scale farming, combined with prior public service, allows him to bridge industry realities with sound public policy.

Leadership at ADC requires both vision and discipline. Jayson has demonstrated both. He has earned the trust of stakeholders across sectors and continues to approach the work with integrity and a focus on long-term impact.

For these reasons, we respectfully and strongly urge the Committee to confirm Jayson Watts to a second term on the ADC Board.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of his confirmation.



94-488 Kunia Road, Waipahu, HI 96797

Phone: (808) 252-0210 Email: jenny.s@alounfarms.com

Marc 1st, 2026

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chairwoman

Senate Committee on Economic Development 7 Tourism,

**GM607– Jayson Watts; Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) – Member at Large**

Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee:

My name is Alec Sou, President of Aloun Farms, Inc., and a long-standing agricultural producer in the State of Hawai‘i. I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of Jayson Watts’ appointment to serve as Member representing Maui County on the Agribusiness Development Corporation Board of Directors.

The role of ADC has never been more critical. As Hawai‘i continues its efforts to strengthen food security, expand local production, and modernize agricultural infrastructure, ADC serves as a central steward of state agricultural lands and development initiatives. The Board’s decisions directly influence access to farmland, irrigation systems, farm infrastructure, and the long-term viability of agricultural enterprises statewide.

Hawai‘i’s agricultural future depends on leadership that understands both the operational realities of farming and the financial structure necessary to support sustainable growth. Permanent crop development, diversified production, and strategic infrastructure investments require thoughtful oversight and long-range planning.

With decades of work in both the public and large private corporation sector, Jayson Watts brings experience, sound judgment, and a forward-looking perspective that will contribute positively to the stability and effectiveness of ADC. His appointment will help ensure that state agricultural lands are managed responsibly while advancing economic opportunity, food resilience, and investment confidence within the agricultural sector.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm this appointment.

Respectfully submitted,

Alec Sou

President, Aloun Farm, Inc.



March 3, 2026

The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Toursim

Re: GM 607 – For consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of GM 607, for the confirmation of **Jayson Watts** to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). Throughout his various roles in government and community, Jayson has consistently demonstrated that he is an effective leader and collaborator who works for the betterment of our State and its residents.

Jayson brings significant professional expertise in regulatory compliance, at both the State and Federal level. This background is invaluable in ensuring that the ADC's strategic objectives remain both ambitious and achievable. His commitment to fostering stakeholder engagement and an environment grounded in proactive communication and thoughtful engagement, reflects the practical, solutions-oriented leadership Hawai'i needs to strengthen food security and support our local farmers.

Access to healthy food has become an increasingly important factor in the overall health of our State. We are grateful for the efforts the ADC has undertaken to help ensure that our residents have access to food that is healthy, affordable, and readily available.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Jayson Watts. His willingness to continue this demanding work reflects his deep dedication to our community, and I am confident that his continued service on the ADC Board will provide meaningful benefits to the State of Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Jennifer A. Diesman  
Senior Vice President  
Government Policy & Advocacy

LARRY JEFTS FARMS, LLC  
PO BOX 27  
KUNIA, HAWAII 96759  
(808) 688-2892

GM607, Jayson Watts  
Gubernatorial Nominee to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC)

Senate EDT Hearing – 1:00 pm  
Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Testimony By: Larry Jeffs  
Position: Support

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Senate EDT Committee:

I am Larry Jeffs, owner and operator of Larry Jeffs Farms, LLC. We have more than 40 years of Hawaii farm experience on Molokai and Oahu. Our family farms grow about 1 million pounds weekly of import replacement produce. I am a volunteer director and chair of the West Oahu Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). I have been an officer of the Hawaii Farm Bureau for many years.

ADC's purpose, established by HRS163-D, is to provide leadership for developing, financing, improving, or enhancing agribusiness enterprises to increase local production for local consumption while continuing to develop commercial exports of locally produced agricultural products. It facilitates the transition of plantation infrastructure and farmland to other agriculture-related enterprises.

Since 2025, Jayson Watts has been the sitting Chair of ADC. He was first appointed in 2022. Under his leadership, ADC has moved forward in collaboration with other ag partners and achieved measurable results. His steady hand in leading the organization is facilitating the transition from plantation agriculture to contemporary agriculture in Hawaii.

Jayson Watts is no stranger to agriculture. He is Mahi Pono's Director of Environmental Health and Safety. He is a volunteer board director of the Maui County Farm Bureau and is also a volunteer director of the Hawaii Farm Bureau. In 2018, while Senior Advisor to Lt. Governor Shan Tsutsui, he created and managed the State's Aina Pono Hawaii State Farm to School Program to increase the purchase and consumption of local agriculture in schools. Mr. Watts brings an agricultural stakeholder perspective to ADC, which is always an asset.

Your favorable consideration of Mr. Watt's nomination to the ADC Board of Directors is appreciated. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 12:29:31 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Megan Blazak	Testifying for Hilo County Farm Bureau	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee,

Hilo County Farm Bureau strongly supports the confirmation of Jayson Watts the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

Mr. Watts currently serves as Chair of the ADC Board and has provided steady, thoughtful leadership throughout his tenure. Under his leadership as Chair, ADC has continued to play an important role in managing agricultural lands and supporting agribusiness development across the state. His reappointment would provide continuity and stability at a critical time for Hawai'i's agricultural industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Megan Blazak  
Chapter President  
Hilo County Farm Bureau



COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

**GM607**  
Jayson Watts

Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 1:00 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

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

The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council **supports GM607** for the consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Mr. Watts has been an advocate for agriculture in the many roles he plays in the community. As the current Chair of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, he has included the Hawaii Cattlemen's Council in board meetings to share the important contributions that the cattle industry plays in agriculture. We appreciate Mr. Watt's commitment to understanding the landscape of Hawaii's agribusiness opportunities and moving us past the challenges.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure. The Hawaii Cattlemen's Council (HCC) is the Statewide umbrella organization comprised of the four county-level Cattlemen's Associations. Ranchers produce a high-quality protein and are the stewards of almost 750 thousand acres of land in Hawaii, or nearly 20% of the State's total land mass. We represent the interests of Hawaii's cattle producers.

Nicole Galase  
Hawaii Cattlemen's Council  
Managing Director





**HAWAIIAN  
COUNCIL**

**LATE**

**Hawai'i State Senate**  
**Committee on Economic Development and Tourism**  
GM607 – Jayson Watts for the Board of Directors of the  
Agribusiness Development Corporation

**RE: Support of GM607**

March 3, 2026

I am writing to express my strong support for the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

In his role as Chair, Jayson has shown unwavering dedication to transforming Hawai'i into a more sustainable and diversified agricultural system. He offers a valuable combination of hands-on private-sector experience managing a large-scale farming operation and in-depth knowledge of state government gained through his service in the Hawaii State Senate and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Hawaii.

Throughout his tenure, Jayson has guided ADC through a pivotal period of change. He has led meaningful governance reforms that strengthened transparency, accountability, and operational discipline. His leadership in advancing the 2026 Hawai'i Agribusiness Plan has established a clear strategic framework with defined priorities and measurable outcomes for the future of agriculture in our state. At the same time, he has remained focused on execution, ensuring that essential infrastructure initiatives, including long-overdue upgrades to aging water delivery systems, stay on schedule and aligned with organizational goals.

Jayson's background in regulatory compliance, including adherence to OSHA, USDA, and EPA standards, helps ensure that ADC's ambitions are grounded in practical implementation. His commitment to proactive communication and a "no surprises" approach to stakeholder engagement reflects the kind of steady leadership Hawai'i needs to strengthen food security and support local farmers.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Jayson Watts. His continued willingness to serve speaks to his deep commitment to our community, and I am confident that his leadership will remain an asset to Hawai'i. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Me ka ha'aha'a,

**Kūhiō Lewis**

Chief Executive Officer, Hawaiian Council

**HAWAIIANS ADVANCING HAWAI'I**

91-1270 Kinoiki Street, Building 1, Kapolei, HI 96707

[info@hawaiiancouncil.org](mailto:info@hawaiiancouncil.org)

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



## HAWAI'I PACIFIC EXPORT COUNCIL

521 Ala Moana Blvd, Suite 214  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
T: (808) 522.8041 F: (808) 522.8045

**LATE**

To: Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
From: Byron Goo, Chair, Hawaii Pacific Export Council (HPEC)  
Date: March 2, 2026

RE: Testimony in Support of GM 607, Confirmation of Jayson Watts to the  
Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation

Chairperson DeCoint, Vice Chair Wakai, Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of HPEC to express our strong support for the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). HPEC represents many companies that export value-added products that are made with Hawaii-grown ingredients.

Jayson has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to transitioning Hawaii's former plantation lands toward a sustainable, diversified agricultural future. He brings the necessary skill set to this role, combining private-sector experience with a large-scale farming operation with a deep understanding of state government from his prior service in the Hawaii State Senate and the Lieutenant Governor's office.

Jayson's professional expertise in regulatory compliance, including OSHA, USDA, and EPA standards, ensures that the ADC's strategic objectives remain both ambitious and executable. His focus on fostering a "no surprises" environment through proactive engagement with stakeholders is exactly the leadership Hawaii needs to bolster food security and support our local farmers.

His willingness to continue this work is a testament to his dedication to the community, and I believe his continued service will greatly benefit the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and favorable consideration of Jayson Watts.

Respectfully,

Byron Goo

**LATE**

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:08:29 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brittany Heyd	Testifying for Mana Up	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing to express my strong support for the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

As the current Chairperson of the ADC Board, Jayson has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to transitioning Hawaii's former plantation lands toward a sustainable, diversified agricultural future. He brings a unique and necessary skill set to this role, combining private-sector experience with a large-scale farming operation with a deep understanding of state government from his prior service in the Hawaii State Senate and the Lieutenant Governor's office.

During his tenure as Chairperson, Jayson has been instrumental in leading the corporation through a significant period of transformation. He has successfully implemented rigorous governance reforms to ensure the organization operates with the transparency, discipline, and accountability expected by both the legislature and the public. By driving the development of the 2026 Hawaii Agribusiness Plan, he has provided a strategic blueprint that offers clear direction and establishes measurable impacts for the state's agricultural future. Furthermore, Jayson has maintained a sharp focus on operational execution, prioritizing critical infrastructure projects, such as modernizing aging water delivery systems, to ensure they move forward on time and on target.

Jayson's professional expertise in regulatory compliance, including OSHA, USDA, and EPA standards, ensures that the ADC's strategic objectives remain both ambitious and executable. His focus on fostering a "no surprises" environment through proactive engagement with stakeholders is exactly the leadership Hawaii needs to bolster food security and support our local farmers.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Jayson Watts. His willingness to continue this demanding work is a testament to his dedication to our community, and I believe his continued service will greatly benefit the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Brittany Heyd and Meli James,

Mana Up



**LATE**

Hawaii Foodservice Alliance LLC, 2720 Waiwai Loop, Honolulu, HI 96819  
Tel: 808.839.2004 ~ Fax: 808.839.2033 ~ HFA@HFAHawaii.com

March 3, 2026

To: Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
FM: Chad Buck  
Owner / Hawaii Foodservice Alliance LLC  
Re: Testimony in Support of GM 607, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS.

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

I'm writing to offer my strong support for Jayson Watts as he is considered for a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

As the current Chair of the ADC Board, Jayson has shown real dedication to helping move Hawaii's former plantation lands toward a more sustainable and diversified agricultural future.

During his time as Chair, Jayson has helped guide the corporation through an important period of transition. He has strengthened governance practices to ensure the organization operates with the transparency, discipline, and accountability that both the Legislature and the public expect.

Jayson's background in regulatory compliance, including OSHA, USDA, and EPA standards, gives him a practical understanding of how to turn strategy into action. He consistently promotes a "no surprises" approach by proactively engaging with stakeholders and maintaining open lines of communication. This kind of steady, thoughtful leadership is exactly what Hawaii needs as we work to strengthen food security and support local farmers.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Jayson Watts.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support.

Chad Buck  
Founder/CEO  
Hawaii Foodservice Alliance LLC



**LATE**

March 2, 2026

Hon. Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Hon. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Members  
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Re: **IN STRONG SUPPORT OF GM 607**; Nomination of Mr. Jayson Watts to the  
Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members:

My name is Ryan Toyomura, and I am a partner with the law firm Ashford & Wriston, LLP, submitting testimony in my personal capacity and not on behalf of my firm.

I write to you in **STRONG SUPPORT** of the nomination of Mr. Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (GM 607).

I have had the pleasure of knowing Mr. Watts for over 15 years having worked with him in the Hawai'i State Senate where he was the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms. He then moved on to senior positions with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor and now in a leadership role with Mahi Pono. In addition to his full-time job, Mr. Watts has given back to the community through various activities with non-profit organizations and his current service on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation ("ADC").

Mr. Watts has proven his commitment to grow agriculture, ensure food security, and support our local farmers. He is imminently qualified for this position, and I strongly urge this Committee to recommend his confirmation to the full Senate.

Very truly yours,

RYAN M. TOYOMURA

MAILING ADDRESS  
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STREET ADDRESS  
First Hawaiian Center / 999 Bishop Street, Suite 1400 / Honolulu, HI 96813  
T 808 539 0400 / F 808 533 4645 / E atty@awlaw.com / www.ashfordwriston.com

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 5:58:26 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David Ellis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have known Mr. Watts for over a decade, and I can attest to his intelligence and his strength of character.

i strongly support his confirmation to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) representing Maui.

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 9:12:21 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kari Sochor	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing to express my strong support for the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

As the current Chairperson of the ADC Board, Jayson has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to transitioning Hawaii's former plantation lands toward a sustainable, diversified agricultural future. He brings a unique and necessary skill set to this role, combining private-sector experience with a large-scale farming operation with a deep understanding of state government from his prior service in the Hawaii State Senate and the Lieutenant Governor's office.

During his tenure as Chairperson, Jayson has been instrumental in leading the corporation through a significant period of transformation. He has successfully implemented rigorous governance reforms to ensure the organization operates with the transparency, discipline, and accountability expected by both the legislature and the public. By driving the development of the 2026 Hawaii Agribusiness Plan, he has provided a strategic blueprint that offers clear direction and establishes measurable impacts for the state's agricultural future. Furthermore, Jayson has maintained a sharp focus on operational execution, prioritizing critical infrastructure projects, such as modernizing aging water delivery systems, to ensure they move forward on time and on target.

Jayson's professional expertise in regulatory compliance, including OSHA, USDA, and EPA standards, ensures that the ADC's strategic objectives remain both ambitious and executable. His focus on fostering a "no surprises" environment through proactive engagement with stakeholders is exactly the leadership Hawaii needs to bolster food security and support our local farmers.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Jayson Watts. His willingness to continue this demanding work is a testament to his dedication to our community, and I believe his continued service will greatly benefit the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 10:14:21 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tim Carson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I want to offer my personal support for the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

I have known Jayson for 26 years. That's long enough to know the difference between someone who shows up for a role and someone who shows up for the work, and Jayson has always been the latter.

What Jayson has accomplished at ADC over the last 4 years is remarkable: He took on the chairmanship of an organization navigating a genuinely difficult transition, moving Hawaii's former plantation lands toward a diversified agricultural future, and he brought both the discipline and the vision the moment required. He drove the development of the 2026 Hawaii Agribusiness Plan, giving the state a real strategic blueprint with measurable outcomes, not just aspirations. He's pushed critical infrastructure forward, aging water delivery systems that farmers depend on, and kept those projects on schedule. And he's done it while instituting the kind of governance reforms that make the legislature and the public confident that ADC is being run with integrity.

What I think gets lost in formal testimony is this: Jayson brings something rare; He is part of the team running a large-scale farming operation, so he understands what farmers actually need; not in theory, but in practice. He has served in the State Senate and the Lieutenant Governor's office, so he understands how government works and how to get things done within it. And he has the regulatory fluency, OSHA, USDA, EPA, to make sure ADC's ambitions stay grounded in what's actually executable.

After 26 years of watching him work, I can tell you his continued service on this board is not just an asset, it's something Hawaii's agricultural future genuinely needs.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration.

Thank you.

Tim



**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:49:41 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Yuki Lei Sugimura	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the reappointment of Jayson Watts to the Board of ADC. He lives agricultgure and works agriculture and is a strong policy advocate for the people and industry.

Yuki Lei Sugimura

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:33:28 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Karey Kapoi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

My name is Karey Kapoi, and I am submitting this testimony in strong support of GM 607, confirming Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

As current Chairperson of the ADC Board, Mr. Watts has demonstrated steady, solutions-oriented leadership demonstrating both vision and inclusion in ensuring all voices are heard and represented in a fair way. Hawai‘i’s former plantation lands represent both opportunity and responsibility, and Mr. Watts has consistently advanced the work of transitioning these lands toward a more diversified, sustainable, and productive agricultural future.

Mr. Watts brings a rare combination of experience through his leadership in the private-sector, coupled with a strong understanding of state government through his prior service in the Hawai‘i State Senate and the Lieutenant Governor’s office. That blend matters for ADC, ensuring a clear strategy, strong governance, and credibility with both farmers and the Legislature.

During his tenure with ADC, Mr. Watts helped guide ADC through meaningful governance and operational improvements, strengthening transparency, reinforcing fiscal and organizational discipline, and setting expectations that the public can trust. He has also helped advance long-term planning, including maintaining focus on infrastructure and system performance that directly impacts agricultural viability.

For these reasons, I respectfully request your favorable consideration of GM 607. Mr. Watts’ continued service will support ADC’s momentum and strengthen Hawai‘i’s broader goals around food security, agricultural resilience, and productive use of our ag lands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

With Aloha,  
Karey Kapoi

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 11:40:03 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Hokulani Holt-Padilla	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to express my strong support for the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

Blake K. Oshiro, Esq.  
222 S. Vineyard Street, #401  
Honolulu HI 96813  
[Blake.Oshiro@808cch.com](mailto:Blake.Oshiro@808cch.com)

March 3, 2026

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

**Subject:** Testimony in **Support of GM 607**, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, **JAYSON WATTS**.

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

I am writing in strong support of Jayson Watts' re-appointment to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

I have known and worked with Mr. Watts in various capacities when he worked for the State Senate as well as for the prior Lt. Governor Shan Tsutsui. During that time, I have found him to be diligent, hard-working and accessible. I have also worked with Mr. Watts in political circles, events and interacted with him in non-work social settings. I have been impressed at his ability to maintain his same pleasant demeanor, and find him easy to work with and be around.

Through his current term on the ADC Board, as well as his role as the current Chairperson of the ADC Board, Jayson has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to transitioning Hawaii's former plantation lands toward a sustainable, diversified agricultural future. The ADC has a varied and important role for our state, and we need good people to serve on the board that have the ability to work with others and find collaborative solutions. I believe Mr. Watts is the right person to continue on in his role.

Therefore, I hope you confirm his appointment and provide him with another opportunity to serve our state.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Blake Oshiro

To: Lynn DeDecoite, Chair  
Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair, and  
The Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

From: William Kunstman

Date: March 3, 2026

Subject: GM 607, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS.

I am writing in strong support of Mr. Jayson Watts for a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). Mr. Watts's professional background is exceptionally well-suited to the needs of the ADC at this critical juncture. His extensive experience in State government, combined with his current role as Director of Environmental Health and Safety for Mahi Pono, equips him with the insight and practical expertise necessary to continue strengthening the organization's performance and effectiveness.

Mr. Watts has demonstrated strong leadership throughout his tenure as Chairperson. He has guided the ADC through a challenging period and advanced the organization's efforts to increase accountability while prioritizing the transition of former plantation lands into viable agricultural enterprises for small and mid-sized farms, the core mission of the ADC.

I respectfully urge you to confirm Mr. Watts for another term, as his continued service would greatly benefit the ADC and the people of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/1/2026 8:24:46 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
stephanie iona	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Respectfully submitting my testimony in support of Jayson Watts to return to the ADC board for another term. Aside from knowing the great work Jayson provides on the ADC board, I am equally impressed with his leadership with myself and other leaders on the HAL/Alaska Airlines Community Advisory Board. Jayson brings a pragmatic approach to result oriented paths he offers for consideration of the members..

He has a "WE" style of collaboration with Aloha. ADC needs for success! !

Senators thank you for your kind consideration for Jayson! Mahalo Stephanie

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 8:04:55 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Myoung Oh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM 607**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Aloha,

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

I respectfully support the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation. His leadership has been central to strengthening the ADC's governance, improving transparency, and advancing the implementation of the 2026 Hawaii Agribusiness Plan.

Jayson brings a rare combination of private-sector agricultural experience and deep knowledge of state government. His focus on modernizing critical water infrastructure, supporting diversified agriculture, and ensuring projects move forward on time and on target has helped restore confidence in the corporation's mission and direction.

Jayson's continued service will provide stability and momentum at a pivotal moment for Hawaii's agricultural future. I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm his nomination.

Mahalo, Myoung



**JACOB AKI**

**P:** 808-230-9071

**E:** jacob@jacobaki.com

**Testimony in Support of GM 607**

**SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAYSON WATTS, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2029.**

**Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 229  
Tuesday, March 3, 2026 | 1:00 p.m.**

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

I am writing in strong support of Jayson Watts and his confirmation to continue serving on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

I have known Jayson for more than a decade. I worked with him during my time as a staffer in the Hawai'i State Senate, when he served on staff to former Lieutenant Governor Shan Tsutsui and former Lieutenant Governor Doug Chin. Throughout that time, it was clear that public service was not simply a job for him. It has been a constant throughout his career.

Jayson's dedication to public service is evident in his nearly two decades of work in government, including serving as a staffer to the late Congresswoman Patsy Mink, as a legislative staffer and Assistant Sergeant-At-Arms in the Hawai'i State Senate, and in senior roles within the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. Across those positions, he developed a deep understanding of how policy decisions impact agriculture, land stewardship, economic development, and more.

Even after transitioning into the private sector, Jayson has continued to serve. His volunteer public service through the Agribusiness Development Corporation reflects his ongoing commitment to strengthening Hawai'i's agricultural foundation. He brings both policy experience and practical insight to the table, and he approaches the work with seriousness and integrity.

Now in my role in the private sector, I continue to collaborate with Jayson on issues that intersect with agriculture, transportation, and economic sustainability. He remains pragmatic, solutions-oriented, and focused on long-term outcomes for our state.

I can personally attest to his leadership, professionalism, and sustained commitment to Hawai'i. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support his confirmation.

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

# Cori J. Terayama

March 2, 2026

## VIA ONLINE SUBMISSION

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

## HEARING:

Date: March 3, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Conference Room 229, State Capitol

**Re: Governor's Message No. 607: JAYSON WATTS, Nominee to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and Committee Members:

I am writing in support of Jayson Watts' nomination for the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Jayson's extensive experience in the local agricultural industry, labor industry, and government has provided him with the skills necessary to lead the Corporation with the transparency, discipline, and accountability expected by both the legislature and the public. During his tenure as Chairperson of the Corporation, Jayson successfully implemented rigorous governance reforms and, by driving the development of the 2026 Hawaii Agribusiness Plan, he provided a strategic blueprint that offers clear direction and establishes measurable impacts for the State's agricultural future. Jayson has also maintained a sharp focus on operational execution, prioritizing critical infrastructure projects, such as modernizing aging water delivery systems, to ensure they move forward on time and on target.

I am confident that Jayson will continue to be an asset to the Corporation and respectfully ask that you confirm his nomination.

Sincerely,



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Cori J. Terayama

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

**From:** Haloa Dudoit

**Date:** March 3, 2026

**Subject:** Testimony in Support of GM 607, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS.

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

I write to offer my **strong support** for GM 607, the confirmation of Jayson Watts to serve a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation

As current Chair of the ADC Board, Jayson has shown an unwavering dedication to advancing the transition of Hawai'i's former plantation lands into a sustainable and diversified agricultural economy. He brings a valuable combination of experience, pairing hands-on leadership in a large-scale private farming operation with a deep understanding of state government gained through his service in the Hawai'i State Senate and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor.

Throughout his tenure as Chair, Jayson has guided the corporation through an important period of transformation. Additionally, Jayson is a hardworking and dedicated individual in everything he does. He ensures that voices don't fall on deaf ears. Jayson not only brings the perspective of neighbor island work, he has also shown his commitment to the neighbor island communities which is commendable.

I respectfully urge your favorable consideration of Jayson Watts confirmation. His continued willingness to serve speaks to his deep commitment to Hawai'i, and I am confident that his leadership will remain an asset to the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Haloa Dudoit

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:05:28 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Benjamin Kudo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have worked on several plantation ditch systems throughout the State since the 1980s. In the 1990s ADC was created by the Legislature to take over the ownership and operation of these ditch systems as the sugar and pineapple plantations closed. ADC serves an important role because of its alignment with our State's agricultural industry.

I support Jayson Watts as a member of the ADC Board. He has a background in commercial agriculture and has led ADC with competence and vision to expand its reach to serve all islands of our State. I recommend with no reservations that you support Mr. Watt's nomination to ADC. Mahalos.

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:21:26 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janet Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support Jayson Watt's confirmation to the Board of Directors of ADC.

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:35:12 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alan Takemoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair DeCoite and committee members,

I strongly support GM 607 - Jayson Watts for the Agribusiness Development Corporation's (ADC) Board of Directors.

Mr. Watts has tremendous amount of knowledge and expertise in Hawaii's agriculture. He's been actively engaged in both public and private capacities and served on multiple levels of leadership roles in moving our ag industry forward.

I respectfully urge your support and approval of GM 607 - Mr. Watt's confirmation to the ADC Board of Directors.

Mahalo,

Alan Takemoto

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:37:00 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tambara Garrick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in Support of GM 607 – Confirmation of Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation

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

My name is Tambara Garrick, and I respectfully submit testimony in strong support of GM 607, confirming Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

As someone who has been involved in Maui’s agricultural community and value-added food businesses, I have seen firsthand how important strong, practical leadership is at the state level. Jayson brings exactly that. He understands agriculture not just from a policy perspective, but from real operational experience managing large-scale farming operations here in Hawai‘i.

During his tenure as Chair of the ADC Board, Jayson has helped guide the organization through meaningful reforms focused on accountability, transparency, and execution. His leadership in advancing the 2026 Hawai‘i Agribusiness Plan demonstrates a commitment to measurable outcomes and long-term strategy, not just ideas, but implementation. At a time when food security, water infrastructure, and diversified agriculture are critical priorities for our state, that kind of disciplined leadership matters.

Jayson also understands how to navigate both the private sector and state government. His experience in regulatory compliance and public service allows him to ask the right questions, anticipate challenges, and ensure projects move forward responsibly. Just as importantly, he is collaborative and solution-oriented, qualities that are essential when working with farmers, state agencies, and community stakeholders.

Hawai‘i’s agricultural future depends on thoughtful stewardship of former plantation lands and strategic investment in infrastructure. I believe Jayson’s continued service on the ADC Board will provide stability, direction, and accountability during this important time.

I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm Jayson Watts to a second term.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Tambara Garrick  
Business Development Consultant  
Resident of Lahaina, Maui

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:42:56 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mike Dahilig	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair and Members,

I SUPPORT the nomination of Jayson Watts to ADC. I have known Mr. Watts both professionally and personally for many years. His record of public service is lengthy, clear, and shows intention. His experience, temperament, and knowledge will undoubtedly add to the discourse on the board. ADC is facing many critical management and resourcing issues, and Mr. Watts' wit, innovative instincts, and nature can help bring people together to collectively solve these items and help move ADC forward.

I respectfully ask this committee to advise and consent to his nomination and forward it to the full Senate for confirmation.

TESTIMONY OF ADRIAN KAMALI'I  
President & CEO, Pae 'Āina Communications

Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
Governor's Message 607  
Tuesday, March 3, 2026 – 1:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference



2 March 2026

Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee:

Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of GM 607, the reappointment of Jayson M. Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

I have known Jayson for more than twenty years. Over that time, I have observed him operate in legislative environments, executive leadership spaces, and within complex agricultural systems. What distinguishes him is not simply technical knowledge, though he clearly possesses that - but his discipline, steadiness, and ability to move large systems forward without drama or distraction.

Jayson is clear in his understanding of the ADC's statutory mandate, the 2026 Hawai'i Agribusiness Plan, and the need to move from vision to execution. That pivot from planning to disciplined implementation is exactly where ADC must be right now.

Agriculture in Hawai'i does not need more rhetoric. It needs infrastructure modernization, regulatory competence, water system rehabilitation, transparent tenant selection, and board members who understand both policy and operations. Jayson's professional background managing environmental health and safety for a 41,000-acre diversified agricultural operation, while navigating OSHA, USDA, EPA, FDA, and state regulatory frameworks, is not theoretical experience. It is operational accountability at scale.

Equally important is his understanding of governance. ADC has faced criticism in past years regarding direction and execution. In his responses, he acknowledges that history directly and focuses on restoring public trust through measurable performance and transparency. That is the posture of someone who understands public service is not about titles but about results.

From my vantage point as someone who works at the intersection of public policy, stakeholder engagement, and government accountability, I value leaders who understand that communication follows performance. You cannot message your way out of infrastructure failure or poor governance. You fix the infrastructure. You strengthen the governance. Then credibility follows.

Pae 'Āina Communications  
1050 Bishop Street, Ste 507  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
[www.paeainapr.com](http://www.paeainapr.com)



PAE 'ĀINA  
COMMUNICATIONS

His emphasis on:

- Modernizing aging irrigation systems
- Reducing water transmission loss
- Supporting workforce development
- Enabling diversified agricultural ecosystems beyond the plantation model

reflects a pragmatic, future-oriented understanding of Hawai'i's agricultural realities.

We are entering a decade where food security, land stewardship, and water management will become increasingly consequential to our economic resilience. ADC's board requires individuals who can balance environmental stewardship, operational discipline, and legislative alignment. Jayson has demonstrated that capacity over decades.

I support his reappointment not out of familiarity, but out of confidence in his ability to execute. Hawai'i's agricultural lands deserve steady, informed leadership focused on moving projects forward on time and on target.

Mahalo nui for your consideration.

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 10:52:10 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dexter Kishida	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair De Coite and Committee members,

I am writing to express my support for the appointment of Jayson Watts to the Agribusiness Development Corporation board.

Having worked with Mr. Watts on projects like Farm to School, Hawaii needs his experience and drive to help shore up the agriculture sector and provide not only a vision for the future, but lay the foundations of a pathway to get there.

Thank you,

Dexter Kishida

Hawaii State Senate  
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Re: GM 607 - Confirmation of Jayson Watts to Agribusiness Development Corporation

Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Chair Lynn DeCoite and Members of the Committee:

My name is Stefanie Sakamoto, and I am pleased to submit this personal testimony in strong support of the reappointment of Jayson Watts to serve a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC), representing Maui County.

Jayson brings steady leadership, practical experience, and a deep understanding of Hawaii's agricultural and economic landscape to the ADC Board. His work reflects a thoughtful balance between supporting local farmers and ranchers, strengthening food security, and ensuring that state agricultural lands are managed responsibly and productively.

Maui County plays a critical role in Hawaii's agricultural future. The challenges facing our farmers — including water access, infrastructure needs, land management, and economic viability — require board members who understand both the policy framework and the realities on the ground. Jayson understands these issues and approaches them with fairness, diligence, and collaboration.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:25:32 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Scott Nunokawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing to provide testimony in favor of Mr. Jason Watts' confirmation for another term on the Agribusiness Development Corporation's Board of Directors. Jason's knowledge of the challenges that we face as a State, and specifically the County of Maui is so valuable to the future of agriculture and our self-sufficiency goals. His passion and leadership both on the ADC Board as well in the larger agricultural community is so important to our continuing the positive progress on the Board. Please re-confirm Jason to another term so that he can continue his great work for the people of the State of Hawaii. Thank you for your attention.



**GORDON M. ARAKAKI**

Attorney at Law, LLLC  
94-1176 Polinahe Place  
Waipahu, Hawaii 96797  
Cell: (808) 542-1542  
E-mail: gordonarakaki@hawaiiantel.net

Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 3, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: Senate Conference Room 229

The Honorable Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Subject: **GM 607** – Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, **JAYSON WATTS**, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee:

I strongly and whole-heartedly support the confirmation and reappointment of **Jayson Watts** to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (“ADC”).

Over the past nineteen years, I have gotten to know Jayson both professionally and personally. We first met in 2007, when he served as the Senate Sergeant at Arms and I served as the Ways and Means Chief of Staff/Committee Clerk, and have kept in touch ever since.

I particularly remember Jayson’s time working for Lt. Gov. Shan Tsutsui, when Jayson took point on the State’s ‘Aina Pono Hawaii State Farm to School Program to increase the purchase and consumption of local agriculture in Hawaii schools. His responsibilities included reforming the Hawaii State Department of Education’s School Food Services Branch budget and educating/retraining over 1,000 cafeteria employees statewide. To do this, the Lt. Gov.’s office and Jayson brought in national award-winning Chef Greg Champion (founder of Beyond Green Partners) to start the ‘Aina Pono Program with a pilot project at Kohala Elementary School that succeeded beyond expectations. Based on that success, the Program quickly expanded to Mililani High School, where it was also hugely successful. Through all of this, Jayson was instrumental in helping Chef Champion understand local cultures and navigate State bureaucracy.

The wide-ranging set of skills that Jayson demonstrated in working with Chef Champion to achieve the successes of the Aina Pono Program are ideal—necessary, I think—for the ADC Board as it works to carry out the ADC’s multi-faceted mission. Jayson has the ability to see and shape a big picture vision of a program, while at the same time having the attention to details and, most importantly, the ability to motivate the people who will turn those visions into reality.

Since his initial appointment three years ago, Jayson has proven his value to the State as he has helped guide the transition of Hawaii’s former plantation lands toward a sustainable,

diversified agricultural future. During his tenure as Chairperson, Jayson has successfully implemented rigorous governance reforms to ensure that the organization operates with transparency, discipline, and accountability. By driving the development of the 2026 Hawaii Agribusiness Plan, he has provided a strategic blueprint that offers clear direction and establishes measurable impacts for the state's agricultural future. Furthermore, Jayson has maintained a sharp focus on operational execution, prioritizing critical infrastructure projects, such as modernizing aging water delivery systems, to ensure they move forward on time and on target.

Personally and professionally, I cannot think of anyone better to help carry out the mission of the ADC "to provide leadership and advocacy for the conversion of agribusiness into a dynamic growth industry through the use of financial and other tools."

I have practiced as an attorney in both the private and public sectors, served as the Chief of Staff/Committee Clerk of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, and been one of the primary drafters of Hawaii's condominium law (as the Real Estate Commission's Condominium Law Recodification Attorney), among other things, and I believe that Jayson Watts is a most deserving and well-qualified candidate for reappointment to the ADC Board of Directors. I respectfully urge the Senate to confirm his nomination.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly by phone at (808) 542-1542 or by e-mail at [gordonarakaki@hawaiiantel.net](mailto:gordonarakaki@hawaiiantel.net).

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Gordon M. Arakaki

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:55:10 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jacce Mikulanec	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha -

I would like to offer my full support for Jayson Watts (GM607) to be confirmed for a second term on the Board of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

Mahalo for your consideration,  
J. Mikulanec



P.O. Box 3174  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96793

To: Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Date: March 3, 2026

Subject: Testimony in Support of GM 607 – Gubernatorial Nominee Jayson Watts

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

I am writing in support of the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

In his role as Chairperson of the ADC Board, Mr. Watts has demonstrated steady leadership during a significant period of organizational transition. His experience in large-scale agricultural operations, combined with prior public service in the Hawai'i State Senate and the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, provides a practical and informed perspective that benefits the ADC's work.

During his tenure, he has emphasized governance reform, transparency, and accountability, while advancing strategic planning efforts including the 2026 Hawai'i Agribusiness Plan. He has also maintained focus on operational priorities such as modernization of critical infrastructure systems that support agricultural productivity.

Mr. Watts brings regulatory and compliance expertise and has fostered proactive engagement with stakeholders across the agricultural community. His continued leadership would provide stability and continuity as ADC advances long-term efforts to strengthen Hawai'i's agricultural economy and food security.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

T. Karen Hanada  
Wailuku, Hawai'i

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 11:58:34 AM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nathaniel Kinney	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee,

I'm pleased to support Jayson M. Watts' reappointment to the Board of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Jayson brings real-world agricultural experience, regulatory expertise, and a strong understanding of the legislative process.

His focus on infrastructure improvements, transparency, and disciplined execution under the 2026 Agribusiness Plan is exactly what ADC needs right now.

He understands both the policy side and the operational realities of agriculture in Hawai'i, and he approaches the work with professionalism and accountability.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of his reappointment.

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Tuesday, March 3, 2026; 1:00 PM  
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 229

**Re: GM 607 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS, for a term to expire 06-30-2029 - IN SUPPORT**

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the committee:

I'm pleased to submit testimony in strong support of the nomination of Jayson Watts to the Agribusiness Development Corporation Board.

He has the background, relevant experience and understanding of the mission of the board, having served on the Board for the last several years. I'm confident he will continue to make significant, positive contributions to the Board.

In the years that I have known Jayson, I have found him to be professional, conscientious, hard-working and collaborative.

Your favorable action on his confirmation is respectfully requested. The State will be well-served by his continued participation on the Agribusiness Development Corporation board. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in support.

Sincerely,

Lori Lum

**LATE**

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 1:47:19 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gil Keith-Agaran	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I strongly support the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

Serving as Chairperson of the ADC Board, Jayson shown a strong commitment to transitioning Hawai'i's former plantation lands toward a sustainable, diversified agricultural future. He brings current private-sector experience with a large-scale farming operation with his personal insights and experience in state government from his prior service in the Hawai'i State Senate and the Lieutenant Governor's office.

During his tenure as Chairperson, Jayson has led the corporation through a significant period of transformation, implemented rigorous governance reforms to ensure the organization operates with transparency, discipline, and accountability rightly expected by the public. Through development of the 2026 Hawai'i Agribusiness Plan, he has provided a strategic blueprint for the state's agricultural future. Furthermore, Jayson has maintained a sharp focus on modernizing aging water delivery systems which are key to farming success.

Jayson's approach and focus on fostering a "no surprises" environment through proactive engagement with stakeholders is exactly the leadership Hawai'i needs to improve food security and support our local farmers.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Jayson Watts. His willingness to continue this demanding work is a testament to his dedication to our community, and I believe his continued service will greatly benefit the State of Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**LATE**

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:02:38 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jimmy Gomes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I totally support Jason Watts for ADC Board. He has a long track record with our agriculture stakeholders.

**LATE**

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:31:42 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
K. Piltz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair DeCoite & Committee Members:

RE: Consideration and Confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation Nominee Jayson Watts for a term to expire 06-30-2029

I strongly support GM607 GubernatorialNominee Jayson Watts for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Diretors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). He has vision and an inclusive leadership style that promotes awareness and connects Hawaii's unique agricultural community with cultural values and practices.

I believe that his continued service as a member of the Board of Directors will provide valuable guidance on agricultural and economic development for our state.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide strong support of Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of ADC.

**LATE**

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 2:45:39 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Todd Apo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide strong support for GM607 and the reappointment of Jayson to the ADC. I have gotten to know Jayson over the years through various activities, including work on Maui post-wildfires and through our community work for the Hawaiian/Alaska Air combination. I have found Jayson to be a thoughtful, empathetic, and well reasoned individual who works towards realistic solutions. I know he brings those skills to the ADC and believe the Corporation would continue to benefit from his service.

**LATE**

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:10:52 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Stephanie P. Donoho	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for the opportunity to support the nomination of Jayson Watts for the Board of Directors for the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

I've had the pleasure of serving with Jayson on Hawaiian / Alaska Airlines Community Advisory Board for the last two years and have been impressed by his thoughtful questions, his neighbor island perspective, and his deep institutional knowledge.

I believe he would be an asset to to the board of the Agribusiness Development Corporation and strongly support his nomination.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Aloha, Stephanie Donoho



**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 3:20:55 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lauren Matsushita	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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

I am writing to express my strong support for the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

As the current Chairperson of the ADC Board, Jayson has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to transitioning Hawaii’s former plantation lands toward a sustainable, diversified agricultural future. He brings a unique and necessary skill set to this role, combining private-sector experience with a large-scale farming operation with a deep understanding of state government from his prior service in the Hawaii State Senate and the Lieutenant Governor’s office.

During his tenure as Chairperson, Jayson has been instrumental in leading the corporation through a significant period of transformation. He has successfully implemented rigorous governance reforms to ensure the organization operates with the transparency, discipline, and accountability expected by both the legislature and the public. By driving the development of the 2026 Hawaii Agribusiness Plan, he has provided a strategic blueprint that offers clear direction and establishes measurable impacts for the state's agricultural future. Furthermore, Jayson has maintained a sharp focus on operational execution, prioritizing critical infrastructure projects, such as modernizing aging water delivery systems, to ensure they move forward on time and on target.

Jayson’s professional expertise in regulatory compliance, including OSHA, USDA, and EPA standards, ensures that the ADC’s strategic objectives remain both ambitious and executable. His focus on fostering a "no surprises" environment through proactive engagement with stakeholders is exactly the leadership Hawaii needs to bolster food security and support our local farmers.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Jayson Watts. His willingness to continue this demanding work is a testament to his dedication to our community, and I believe his continued service will greatly benefit the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Lauren Matsushita

**LATE**

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:52:13 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ken H Kakesako	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to express my strong support for GM607 nominating Jayson Watts to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC).

Mr. Watts has had extensive experience in both the private and public sector making him an ideal candidate for a position on the ADC Board. His most recent time spent at Mahi Pono also gives him unique insight into the agricultural issues facing a large agricultural operation in Hawaii; an insight that can help with guiding the direction of ADC in line with their mission to facilitate the transition of agricultural lands from plantation operations into other agricultural enterprises.

I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Watts during his time with the Lieutenant Governor's Office where he was tasked with overseeing the Farm to School Program and the R.E.A.C.H. Program. I found that he was a collaborator who tried to bring together different stakeholders to find common ground in tackling two very difficult issues. He is solutions-oriented and a relationship-builder and his continued presence on the ADC Board would help move the needle forward on supporting local agriculture in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Mr. Watts and his nomination.

**LATE**

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

**FROM: Ryan Yamane**

**DATE: March 2, 2026**

**SUBJECT: Testimony in Support of GM 607, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAYSON WATTS**

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

I am writing to express my strong support for the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC). I have known Jayson for more than 20 years and can personally attest to his integrity, leadership, and qualifications for this role.

As current Chairperson of the ADC Board, Jayson has led the organization through a critical period of transformation, guiding the transition of Hawaii's former plantation lands toward a more sustainable and diversified agricultural future. He brings a valuable combination of private-sector agricultural experience and public-sector leadership from his service in the Hawaii State Senate and the Lieutenant Governor's office.

During his tenure, Jayson has strengthened governance practices, advanced the 2026 Hawaii Agribusiness Plan to provide clear strategic direction, and prioritized essential infrastructure improvements, including modernization of water delivery systems. His expertise in regulatory compliance and his commitment to transparent, proactive stakeholder engagement have helped position ADC to better support local farmers and strengthen Hawaii's food security.

I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of Jayson Watts. His continued service will greatly benefit the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony.

**LATE**

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:11:59 PM  
Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa shozuya	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

From: Lisa Shozuya  
lisashozuya@gmail.com

To: Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
Re: GM 607 – Testimony in Support of Jayson Watts  
Date: March 2, 2026

Aloha Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of the confirmation of Jayson Watts to a second term on the Board of Directors of the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

I have known Jayson through his service and leadership with Lt. Governor Shan Tsutsui, and what has always stood out the most has been his steadiness and commitment to doing a job well. He shows up prepared, does the work, and follows through to assure the best outcome.

Jayson leads with rooted local values, integrity and discipline. His experience managing large-scale agricultural operations and navigating complex regulatory environments reflects both intelligence and an understanding of how policy translates into real-world execution. He is willing to do what it takes to get the job done right.

Most of all, Jayson cares deeply about Hawai‘i’s agricultural food future. His commitment to infrastructure modernization, transparency, and long-term food security reflects something beyond operations or policy. It reflects a deeper understanding that we must continue to create more durable systems that support the farmers and farming practices that will feed our communities for generations to come.

Jayson Watts is a dependable, thoughtful, and capable leader. He is a valuable asset to the State of Hawai‘i, and I respectfully ask for your favorable consideration of GM 607.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Shozuya

**LATE**

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 9:14:41 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Trisha Kehaulani Watson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Senators,

I am writing in very strong support of Jayson Watts. I have known Jayson for years and can say, without hesitation, that he is an incredible public servant and has been a wonderful Chair at ADC. The public is very lucky to have him in this important role.

Apologies for the brevity of this testimony and for being unable to attend in person. I am currently out of the country.

Mahalo

Trisha Kehaulani Watson

**LATE**

**GM-607**

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:12:36 AM  
Testimony for EDT on 3/3/2026 1:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jonathan Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Committee Members:

My name is Jonathan Ching, and I am offering testimony in my individual capacity, in STRONG SUPPORT of GM 607.

I have personally known Mr. Watts for over 20 years, since working our time for former Lt. Gov and State Senator Shan Tsutsui. I have always known Mr. Watt's has had his heart in public service, especially the island of Maui, where he is from. I believe Mr. Watts' experience serving for the late Congresswoman Patsy Mink help shaped him into being an astute, diplomatic, and compassionate professional.

Mr. Watts' current role as Director of Environmental Health and Safety with Mahi Pono, LLC, plus his experience leading 'Aina Pono Hawaii State Farm to School Program with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, have prepared him to be a valued member of the Agribusiness Development Corporation, whose mission is to provide leadership and advocacy for the conversion of agribusiness into a dynamic growth industry.

He also currently serves as a member of the Hawaii Community Advisory Board for Alaska Airlines, as well as a member of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federal and Maui Couty Farm Bureau.

I humbly ask the Committee to recommend the Senate of the State of Hawaii to advise and consent to Mr. Watt's re-appointment to the Agribusiness Development Corporation.

Mahalo Piha!