



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

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

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT DIVISION

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

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Statement of
DENNIS T. LING
Administrator

Business Development and Support Division
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

Tuesday, April 6, 2026
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
GM609

**Submitting in consideration of confirmation to the
Community-Based Economic Development Advisory Council,
Gubernatorial Nominee, MICHELLE AGBIGAY, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.**

Chair Decoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Committee. The Business Development and Support Division (BDSD) of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports **GM609** which submits for consideration and confirmation Ms. Michelle Agbigay to serve on the Community-Based Economic Development (CBED) Advisory Council.

The CBED Program is committed to fostering sustainable community-driven initiatives and strengthening local economic opportunities aligned with Hawai'i's values. The Advisory Council plays a central role in reviewing financing requests and guiding program decisions that advance community-based economic development statewide.

Ms. Agbigay brings extensive experience in community-focused economic development, public service, and small business leadership. Through her work with the County of Hawai'i's Department of Research and Development, she has consistently advanced initiatives that enhance local capacity, expand opportunities for small

businesses, and foster collaboration among community partners. Her background demonstrates a strong ability to bridge government resources with on-the-ground needs.

In addition to her public-sector experience, Ms. Agbigay's experience as a small business owner gives her valuable perspective on the challenges and opportunities faced by local entrepreneurs. This combination of practical knowledge and public service experience allows her to understand both the operational realities of small businesses and the broader strategies needed to support community-based economic growth.

Ms. Agbigay's leadership, community insight, and dedication to improving economic opportunities for Hawai'i's business community make her a strong candidate for the CBED Advisory Council. Her broad perspective will support the Council's efforts to advance CBED's mission and objectives.

BDSB respectfully requests your favorable consideration and confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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Statement of
James Kunane Tokioka
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Tuesday, April 7, 2026
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229
Director

In consideration of
GM609
**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Community-Based
Economic Development Advisory Council, Gubernatorial Nominee,
MICHELLE AGBIGAY, for a term to expire 06-30-2029.**

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

I **support** GM609 which submits for consideration and confirmation Ms. Michelle Agbigay to serve on the Community-Based Economic Development (CBED) Advisory Council.

The mission of the CBED Program is to develop viable, sustainable ventures, and invest in community-based development projects that serve local needs and are compatible with the vision, character, and cultural values of their communities. The CBED Advisory Council reviews financing requests and makes recommendations on the awarding of loans and grants, subject to the final approval of the DBEDT Director.

Ms. Agbigay brings more than a decade of experience leading initiatives that connect government and grassroots efforts to strengthen local economies. In her current role as Economic Development Specialist for the County of Hawai'i's Department of Research and Development, she has successfully spearheaded projects such as a targeted initiative supporting small business entrepreneurs through access to commercial space, resource navigation, and relationship building. Her proven ability to coordinate cross-sector partnerships and implement people-centered strategies has consistently delivered measurable results in community engagement, sustainability, and economic development.

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Beyond her public sector leadership, Ms. Agbigay is the owner of Tun Hawai'i, a Hawai'i-based small business specializing in curated drink experiences that emphasize quality, creativity, and personalized service. This entrepreneurial experience provides her with firsthand insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by local businesses, particularly in rural and underserved communities. Her dual perspective — as both a public sector leader and a small business owner — uniquely positions her to make meaningful contributions to the CBED Advisory Council and advance its mission of empowering Hawai'i's communities through economic self-sufficiency and innovation.

I am honored to submit this testimony in support of Michelle Agbigay's nomination to the CBED Advisory Council and humbly ask for your favorable consideration and confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.