

**LETTER OF INTEREST FOR
THE STATE SISTER-STATE AND INTERNATIONAL
PARTNERSHIP COMMISSION – Wesley F. Fong**

I am presently the chair of the State Ethics Commission and my term ends in June, 2026. In my desire to continue my service to the state the above commission was recommended to me.

In reviewing the mission of the commission I believe that given my professional, military, educational and national and international community service background, I can contribute to the mission of the commission.

I am a former state supervising deputy attorney general and now an adjunct professor teaching law and ethics at the University of Hawaii, Shidler Business School, Travel Industry Management, with many students from Japan, Taiwan, China, the Philippines and South Korea in my class. As a Vietnam veteran, besides Vietnam, I served in South Korea, Thailand and Japan. My last duty assignment was serving as the Staff Judge Advocate, U.S. Army/Japan. I am also a past president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, which hosts and interacts with China and Taiwan in joint cultural and business projects. As chamber president I also worked with the Department of Business, Economic, Development and Tourism in promoting exchanges with China and Taiwan. On a national and international community service level, as a past president of the West Honolulu Rotary Club besides national service projects, we also interact with our sister clubs in Taiwan, Kyoto, Nagoya, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Makati in the Philippines on joint international service projects. Our most recent joint Rotary service projects that I participated in were visiting and supporting a school for the disabled in Hanoi, Vietnam and an eye clinic in Zhong Shan, China. I also served as the vice chair of the Hawaii/Pacific Export Council, U.S. Department of Commerce.

With this diverse background and knowledge, I believe that I can be of service to the commission's mission of fostering, evaluating and perhaps suggesting other sister-state and international cultural, economic, social and diplomatic partnerships.

I firmly believe that the friendship and understanding established through these exchanges and partnerships on an equally shared responsibility basis,

on a national and international level, do benefit the state. Moreover, it would make for peace in the Indo Pacific region that would not only benefit our state but our nation. What better venue to achieve all of these goals but in Hawaii, the cross roads of the Pacific.



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

KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKAI

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT DIVISION

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

DENNIS T. LING
ADMINISTRATOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804
Web site: dbedt.Hawaii.gov

Telephone: (808) 586-2355
Fax: (808) 586-2377

Statement of
DENNIS T. LING
Administrator

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

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WATER, LAND, CULTURE AND THE ARTS**

Thursday, April 23, 2026
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225

In consideration of
GM789

**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Sister-State and
International Partnerships Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee, WESLEY F.
FONG, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.**

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and members of the Committee. The Business Development and Support Division (BDSD) of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) strongly supports GM789, which submits for consideration and confirmation Mr. Wesley F. Fong to serve on the Hawai'i Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission.

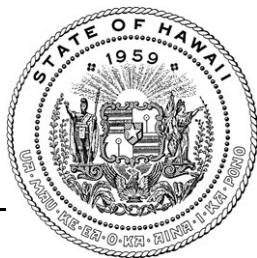
The Hawai'i Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission plays a vital role in strengthening Hawai'i's global relationships and engagement. Its responsibilities include reviewing and evaluating proposals for new sister-state and international partnerships; making recommendations to the Governor and Legislature; establishing criteria for determining the appropriateness and feasibility of proposed partnerships; monitoring existing agreements; facilitating governmental, cultural, educational, and business exchanges; and supporting DBEDT's international outreach and foreign delegation coordination.

Mr. Fong brings vast international relations experience and Asia-Pacific leadership to the Commission. He has served in key roles including Staff Judge Advocate for U.S. Army Japan and Headquarters IX Corps, where he worked closely with international and multinational partners on complex legal and operational matters. As Deputy Commander of the Pacific Liaison Command, he supported regional coordination across the Pacific and worked to strengthen engagement between the United States and partner nations. His service has been recognized through numerous distinctions, including the Legion of Merit, Bronze Stars, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

Beyond his military service, Mr. Fong has contributed significantly to Hawai'i's global economic outreach through his work with the Hawai'i/Pacific Export Council under the U.S. Department of Commerce. His knowledge of international trade, diplomacy, and cross-cultural collaboration makes him an ideal candidate to guide Hawai'i's sister-state and international partnership efforts.

Mr. Fong's extensive leadership, international expertise, and commitment to public service will greatly benefit the Commission and support Hawai'i's efforts to cultivate meaningful and mutually beneficial global relationships.

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
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Thursday, April 23, 2026
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**Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Sister-State and
International Partnerships Commission, Gubernatorial Nominee,
WESLEY F. FONG, for a term to expire 06-30-2030.**

Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Members of the Committee:

I **strongly support** GM789, which requests the Senate's consideration and confirmation of Mr. Wesley F. Fong to the Hawai'i Sister-State and International Partnerships Commission.

The Commission's responsibilities include reviewing and evaluating proposals for new sister-state and international partnerships, recommending actions to the Legislature and Governor, establishing criteria to ensure diplomatic and cultural alignment, monitoring existing agreements, facilitating exchanges, and supporting DBEDT's international outreach. These duties are essential to strengthening Hawai'i's global connections and ensuring partnerships that bring economic, educational, and cultural value to the State.

Mr. Fong's considerable international and regional leadership experience makes him an excellent candidate for this commission. His service as Staff Judge Advocate for U.S. Army Japan and Headquarters IX Corps involved legal leadership in multinational settings, requiring diplomacy, cross-cultural coordination, and collaboration with foreign counterparts. As Deputy Commander of the Pacific Liaison Command, he advanced Hawai'i's strategic connections throughout the Asia-Pacific region. His work with the Hawai'i/Pacific Export Council further demonstrates his commitment to international economic development and strengthening Hawai'i's role in global commerce.

DBEDT Testimony

GM 789

Page 2 of 2

Mr. Fong's distinguished military service, academic contributions, and extensive community involvement highlight a deep commitment to service, leadership, and international cooperation. His background aligns strongly with the Commission's mission to guide Hawai'i's sister-state and international partnerships.

For these reasons, DBEDT respectfully requests your favorable consideration and confirmation of Wesley F. Fong.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Mr. Fong.

Committee: Senate Committee on Water, Land, Culture and the Arts
Bill Number: GM 789
Hearing Date/Time: April 23, 2026, 1:00 p.m.
Regarding: Testimony in Support of the Confirmation of Wesley F. Fong

Aloha Chair Lee, Vice Chair Inouye, and Committee Members:

I am pleased to recommend Wesley F. Fong for appointment to the Hawai'i Commission on Sister-State Relationships. I submit this recommendation in my personal capacity.

I have had the privilege of working with Wes over the past five years during his service on the Hawai'i State Ethics Commission, including the last four years as Chair. Throughout that time, he has consistently demonstrated a thoughtful, independent perspective and a deep commitment to public service. Wes is not hesitant to ask difficult questions or challenge existing assumptions when doing so advances the public interest. His leadership helped prompt meaningful discussions on emerging issues, including the ethical standards applicable to the judiciary and the importance of strengthening anti-nepotism safeguards.

Wes brings extensive legal experience to his work, having held senior roles across state and county government, including as a Supervising Deputy Attorney General and Senior Deputy Corporation Counsel. His background, combined with his integrity and sound judgment, enables him to navigate complex issues with both rigor and balance.

Equally important, Wes approaches public service with humility, collegiality, and a genuine respect for differing viewpoints. He has been an effective leader and collaborator, always focused on advancing principled, fair, and practical outcomes.

I am confident that Wes will be an asset to the Hawai'i Commission on Sister-State Relationships and will serve with distinction. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,

/S/ Robert D. Harris
Robert D. Harris
Executive Director and General Counsel
Hawai'i State Ethics Commission