



**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

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

Testimony 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

In consideration of
GM794
Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the
Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee,
NICOLE CACAL, for a term to expire **06-30-2028**.

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

I **support** GM794, a proposal to consider and confirm Nicole Cacal to the board of the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC).

As the executive director of TRUE Initiative, Nicole will provide valuable insights from local businesses and other TRUE members as HTDC works to grow the local tech economy in collaboration with its ecosystem partners. In her role at TRUE, she cultivates partnerships with enterprise technology leaders, government agencies and academic institutions to advance digital transformation initiatives and develops comprehensive strategic plans aligning stakeholder interests across public and private sectors while managing budgets, securing funding, and executing sponsorships.

She is also a mentor with Hawai'i FoundHer, helping to accelerate Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander and Asian American (NHPIAA) women business owners and entrepreneurs. In addition, Nicole's experience with operations management, cross-functional collaboration and public-private partnerships will serve as assets to HTDC.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



SERVCO PACIFIC INC.
2850 PUKOLOA ST. STE. 300
HONOLULU, HI 96819 USA

O. 808.564.1300
F. 808.564.1393

SERVCO.COM

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

RE: **GM 794 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, NICOLE CACAL, for a term to expire 06-30-2028 – In Support**
Tuesday, April 7, 2026; 1:00 PM
Conference room 229

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

I am writing in support of the confirmation of Nicole Cacal to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation. I offer this testimony both as President and CEO of Servco Pacific, Inc. and as Director Emeritus of the TRUE Initiative, where I have worked alongside Nicole and witnessed the impact of her leadership up close.

From my perspective leading one of Hawai'i's largest locally owned companies, the challenge we face is clear: our economy must diversify, and technology is the engine that will drive that diversification. But technology development does not happen in isolation. It requires leaders who can translate between the private sector, government, and education to ensure that innovation leads to real economic activity and real jobs. Nicole is one of the most effective people I have encountered at doing exactly that.

What sets Nicole apart is her ability to listen to what industry actually needs and then build the partnerships to deliver it. At the TRUE Initiative, she has assembled a coalition of more than twenty private and public sector member organizations, all working toward a shared vision of building Hawai'i's technology-enabled economy. That kind of coalition-building is precisely what HTDC needs from its board members.

I also want to speak to Nicole's character and governance instincts. In my years serving on the TRUE board, I have found her to be transparent, disciplined in her decision-making, and genuinely committed to doing what is right for Hawai'i's communities. She does not pursue innovation for its own sake. She asks who

benefits, whether local families can access the opportunities being created, and how we ensure that the next generation does not have to leave the islands to build a career in technology.

Hawai'i needs board members at HTDC who understand both the urgency of technology development and the responsibility of ensuring it serves our people. Nicole brings both. I wholeheartedly recommend her confirmation.

Mahalo for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Peter Dames

President & CEO, Servco Pacific, Inc.

Director Emeritus, TRUE Initiative



1000 Bishop Street, Suite 701
Honolulu, HI 96813
info@pacxa.com | www.pacxa.com
P: 808-585-0444 | F: 808-537-9300

April 6th, 2026

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

RE: GM794, Submitting for consideration and confirmation to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation, Gubernatorial Nominee, NICOLE CACAL, for a term to expire 06-30-2028.

DATE: Tuesday, April 7, 2026, 1:00 PM, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee:

My name is Kelly J. Ueoka, and I am the President and CEO of Pacxa, a locally owned and operated technology consulting firm. I am writing in strong support of Nicole Cacal's nomination and confirmation to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation. I have known Nicole for 2 years in her professional capacity as Executive Director of the TRUE (Technology Readiness User Evaluation) initiative, which is a non-profit organization driven by a committee of public and private sector leaders who share technology-based solutions to common business problems, helping to increase sustainability and awareness for technology use cases, specific to helping local organizations of any size.

As a board member of TRUE, I have observed Nicole in her professional capacity, building strong momentum for digital transformation use cases, while educating the broader community about the possibilities. She has collaborated well with local business leadership, technology professionals, and others to help drive awareness and build advanced and demonstrable use cases that can provide multi-purpose use for local organizations. She also thoroughly recognizes the need to advance Hawai'i's technology skills, industry, and strategic focus on being competitive. She has leveraged broad relationships with other nationally recognized institutions to help bring more resources to Hawai'i. Through TRUE, Nicole continues to oversee the AI and Cloud Summit, which is one of the more successful and well-attended technology conferences held annually, in Hawai'i.

Please support GM794 and Nicole Cacal's nomination to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KJ. Ueoka'.

Kelly J. Ueoka, President, Pacxa

April 6, 2026

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
Hawai'i State Capitol, Room 230
Honolulu, HI 96813

RE: Testimony in Strong Support of the Appointment of Nicole Cacal to the Board of Directors, Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC)

Aloha Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rick Hopfer, and I am the Executive Vice President and Chief Information Officer for HMSA. I serve as Chair of the Board of Directors of the TRUE Initiative, a Hawai'i-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to technology job creation, workforce development, and cross-sector collaboration. I am writing in strong support of the confirmation of Nicole Cacal to the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC).

I have had the privilege of working closely with Nicole since she assumed the role of Executive Director at the TRUE Initiative. In that capacity, I have observed firsthand her exceptional ability to bring together diverse stakeholders across government, private enterprise, academia, and philanthropy around shared goals that advance Hawai'i's technology ecosystem. She is a rare leader who combines strategic vision with the operational discipline to deliver measurable results.

Under Nicole's leadership, the TRUE Initiative has secured collaborations with MIT, the University of Hawai'i, and the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) to develop the Hawai'i AI Center, what will be the nation's first locally governed AI hub. This initiative is designed to develop and operate artificial intelligence based on community priorities and Hawai'i values, creating both the talent pipeline and the jobs needed to provide opportunity in the islands.

Nicole's cross-sector experience, her track record of building sustainable partnerships, and her genuine commitment to creating local opportunity make her an outstanding candidate for the HTDC board. I am confident she will bring the same energy, integrity, and results-oriented leadership to this role that she brings to the TRUE Initiative every day.

I respectfully urge the Committee to confirm her appointment.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Hopfer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rick Hopfer
Executive Vice President & Chief Information Officer, HMSA
Chair, Board of Directors, TRUE Initiative