

Written Statement of
Trung Lam, Executive Director

before the
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Tuesday, March 17, 2026
1:00 PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HB1613 HD1
RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in strong support of HB1613 HD1.

As Executive Director of the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC), I would like to emphasize the importance of advanced manufacturing to Hawai'i's economic diversification strategy, particularly across the ocean, space, and dual use sectors.

Advanced manufacturing is the enabling layer of these industries. In ocean technology, it supports the production of sensors, autonomous platforms, marine energy components, and corrosion-resistant systems. In space, it enables fabrication of satellite subsystems, precision components, ground support infrastructure, and space domain awareness technologies. These are high-value, export-oriented activities that create skilled jobs and anchor intellectual property in Hawai'i.

Many of these technologies are dual use. Capabilities developed for national security applications frequently translate into commercial markets in shipping logistics, sustainability and coastal resilience, and health. Strengthening advanced manufacturing in Hawai'i enhances both our economic resilience and our contribution to the domestic industrial base.

A position in advanced manufacturing and cyber security is needed to align the work of existing groups such as Honolulu Community College working with Kui Hao, to the Forge on Hickam Air Force Base, and future Public-Private Partnership(PPP) shared facilities currently being developed.

HB1613 HD1 also supports a more integrated and strategic approach to brand and marketing. This function is often underestimated but is essential as Hawai'i competes for federal funding, startups, private investment, and top-tier talent. Bringing brand and marketing work in house improves consistency, quality control, and shows that Hawai'i is serious about technology development. It also reduces the need to manage multiple contracts with third-party vendors for services, saving time and



administrative resources. It also preserves institutional knowledge and allows faster response to emerging opportunities.

For Hawai'i to lead in ocean innovation, space systems, bio manufacturing, and advanced manufacturing more broadly, we must align infrastructure, workforce, capital, and communications. HB1613 HD1 supports that alignment.

HTDC respectfully urges your support for this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



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

**Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 1:00PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

RE: HB1613 HD1 Relating to the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation

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

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 1613 House Draft 1 (HB1613 HD1), appropriates funds for the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation to establish Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist and Marketing and Branding Specialist positions. As a State that hosts all six branches of military and received \$10.2 billion in defense spending (2023), these positions will be crucial in stimulating the innovation that galvanizes national security.

HB 1613 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Military and Defense. Innovation is of particular importance to this pillar, as our 2030 Blueprint finds that Department of Defense allocations toward Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation (RDT&E) have doubled between 2016 and 2023. As cybersecurity and emerging technology fields increasingly rely on advanced capabilities such as artificial intelligence, preparing a skilled, local workforce is essential to support efficiency, cost savings, and mission readiness while reducing risk to human life. Similarly, additive and other technology-based manufacturing capabilities can significantly hasten repair timelines, lower sustainment costs, and improve operational resilience. The investment in innovation represented by HB 1613 HD1 will allow HTDC to expand its capacity to support cybersecurity and advanced manufacturing industry development, capture trends in institutional spending, and strengthen Hawaii's technology ecosystem through sustained marketing, outreach, and promotion.

The provision of permanent funding for manufacturing and cybersecurity capacity at HTDC is vital towards the development of these respective economies. With the cybersecurity job market in Honolulu projected to increase by 32% between 2022 and 2032, this investment will benefit the State by decreasing our import reliance, creating jobs in State-identified priority industries, and stimulating innovation for technologies that bolster national security. The inclusion of marketing and branding capacity is also of prime importance, contributing towards robust, cohesive, and engaging messaging around HTDC's full suite of services. This encourages further utilization of these services while publicizing HTDC's accomplishments and success stories, improving return on investment across organizational efforts.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass House Bill 1613 House Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



Hawai'i Angels
335 Merchant Street, Suite #516
Honolulu, HI 96813

Statement of **Alexi Drouin**
Assistant Director, Hawai'i Angels

before the

Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Regarding HB1613 HD1:
"Relating to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation"

Testimony in Support

Date: March 16, 2026

To:

Chair Senator Lynn DeCoite,
Vice Chair Senator Glenn Wakai,
and esteemed members of the Committee

Aloha,

My name is Alexi Drouin, and I am the Assistant Director at Hawai'i Angels, Program Operations at Blue Startups, and Ambassador for Hawai'i Tech Week. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of HB1613**.

Wearing these hats gives me a clear, practical view of what the Hawai'i Tech Ecosystem needs most. The biggest gap is: **How do we tell Hawai'i's tech story?** This question of "story" keeps coming up in every serious ecosystem conversation, including HTDC's Strategic Planning Workshop (Charting Hawaii's Tech Future).

This is not a hypothetical story. **Hawai'i's Tech Ecosystem** is already happening today. What we need now is a clearer vision, pathway, and platform for **sharing this story** to the world.

This is why I strongly support HB 1613 because it gives HTDC the capacity, by funding one permanent **Marketing and Branding** Specialist position, to do what the ecosystem needs most right now: marketing and branding our story of "**Built with Aloha!**" to the world.

Here is what being better able to tell our **story** unlocks across the **Hawai'i's Tech Ecosystem**:

- **Blue Startups:** Accelerate Hawai'i-based and female founders startups in Hawaii.



- **Hawai'i Angels:** Elevate startups and strengthen Hawai'i's funding capital pipeline.



- **Hawai'i Tech Week:** Amplify the heartbeat of Hawai'i tech scene: Our community.



- **ThriveHI:** Opens the door to tech with monthly meetups to welcome newcomers.



Hawai'i does not need to become Silicon Valley. Hawai'i's Tech Ecosystem needs to amplify the marketing and branding that our companies are **Built in Hawai'i with Aloha.**

Our mission is simple: make Hawaii more attractive for business to the world. A dedicated HTDC marketing and branding specialist would help us on our mission to tell the world that Hawaii really means business.

You can see this in action when **Blue Startups** is accelerating companies, **Hawai'i Angels** showing up monthly to fund them, **Hawai'i Tech Week** convening the whole ecosystem, **ThriveHI** being the front door for newcomers, **Purple Mai'a** elevating culturally grounded founders, and **HTDC** charting the future of the statewide strategy.



Hawai'i already has a thriving tech community. The missing piece is a dedicated person whose job is to **organize, promote, and scale the story of what's already working.**

That's why HB 1613 and this **Marketing and Branding Position** matter. Turning scattered effort into a shared narrative, spotlight local wins, and make the pathway clear, from sparking curiosity to building community to growing companies. It also helps externally by **making Hawai'i visible**, credible, and easy to engage, so we can attract more talent, more capital, and bring our kama'āina home. **Telling our story** helps strengthen the entire Hawai'i tech ecosystem.

HB 1613 helps local founders, partners, and investors tell our story, with aloha, to the world so Hawai'i can become the **Startup Paradise** we've all been working to build together.

Thank you for your consideration, and I respectfully request your support in passing HB 1613.

Mahalo,

Alexi Drouin
Assistant Director
Hawai'i Angels

LATE

ThriveHI

111 Hekili Street
Kailua, HI 96734

To be presented to the
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
Tuesday, March 17, 2026

Regarding **HB1613 HD1**:
“Relating to the Hawai‘i Technology Development Corporation”



Testimony in Support

Date: March 16, 2026

From: Zack Hernandez
Executive Director, ThriveHI
Email: zack@thrivehi.org

To: Chair Senator Lynn DeCoite,
Vice Chair Senator Glenn Wakai,
and esteemed members of the Committee

Aloha,

My name is Zack Hernandez, and I am the Executive Director of ThriveHI. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB1613.

ThriveHI supports HB1613, which appropriates funds for the Hawai‘i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to establish one permanent 1.0 FTE Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist position and one permanent 1.0 FTE Marketing and Branding Specialist position.

ThriveHI is a nonprofit focused on growing Hawai‘i’s startup and tech economy. We convene the community through events and create higher paying jobs and remote careers for Hawaii’s tech ecosystem. We share ecosystem updates through a regular newsletter. We publish and gather research and resources. We also partner with other organizations to expand statewide impact. Our work is aligned with creating higher quality jobs for local residents and strengthening economic resilience.

HB1613 is a practical capacity investment. It helps HTDC execute its mandate to support startups, enable commercialization, coordinate statewide innovation, and promote Hawai‘i as a place to build and scale technology companies. These are core ingredients for economic diversification, stronger local career pathways, and improved resilience across the islands.

The Marketing and Branding Specialist position matters in particular. Many programs and facilities already exist. The gap is often awareness, clarity, and consistent outreach. A dedicated role can improve how founders, students, employers, investors, and partners discover and access HTDC resources. It can help ensure neighbor island participation through consistent communications and relationship building. It also strengthens Hawai'i's external story, which supports talent attraction and investment attraction.

The Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist position is also timely. Advanced manufacturing supports higher wage technical roles and more local supply chain capability. Cybersecurity capacity supports businesses, critical infrastructure, and a safer digital economy. Together, these roles help Hawai'i compete for projects, partners, and talent that increasingly expect strong security and modern production capability.

This bill supports outcomes that matter statewide. More local jobs with growth potential. A more diversified economy. Stronger resilience to shocks. Better retention of local talent. More attraction of outside investment that complements local priorities.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB1613.

Mahalo,

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

Zack Hernandez
Executive Director
ThriveHI



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Honolulu, HI 96813
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Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Advisor*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

LATE

TO: Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 17, 2026

TIME: 1pm

RE: HB1613 HD1 Relating to Hawaii Technology Development Corporation

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 to strengthen Hawaii's technology and innovation ecosystem by appropriating funds to establish advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity specialist and marketing and branding specialist positions.

Many of our member businesses have successfully utilized HTDC programs to do things like increase manufacturing capacity, upgrade equipment, increase efficiency, and become technologically enabled.

Providing state funding for HTDC to continue this work will ensure that more Hawaii companies have the opportunity to utilize these programs to grow and thrive. Supporting the growth and advancement of these companies leads to a more diverse, more technologically agile, and stronger economy for us all. We urge the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.

HB-1613-HD-1

Submitted on: 3/15/2026 7:24:53 PM

Testimony for EDT on 3/17/2026 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Anonsen	Testifying for The Maritime Group	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Subject: Support for H.B. 1613, H.D.1

Please accept this brief note of support for H.B. 1613, H.D.1, relating to the Hawai‘i Technology Development Corporation. I am currently traveling overseas and regret that I am unable to provide more detailed comments.

This measure will help strengthen Hawai‘i’s innovation ecosystem by supporting advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, and strategic marketing capabilities within HTDC. These investments can play an important role in supporting economic diversification, strengthening local businesses, and advancing Hawai‘i’s technology sector

Mahalo for your consideration of this measure.

Respectfully,

William F. Anonsen

Principal

The Maritime Group, LLC

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO 1613 HD1, RELATING TO
THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Position: **Support**

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

Please accept this testimony in **strong support** of this bill, to appropriate funds to the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to establish and fill specialist positions that would help support advanced manufacturing initiatives for the state the Hawai`i.

Simonpietri Enterprises LLC (SEL) is an O`ahu-based small business developing innovative ways to recycle waste generated in Hawai`i into renewable natural gas, green hydrogen, organic and potash fertilizers, and other beneficial recycled-material products for use in Hawai`i. As a previous recipient of the Hawai`i Small Business Innovative Research (HSBIR) matching grant award, we recognize the ability of HTDC to accelerate innovation and facilitate local manufacturing initiatives. We have previously used HSBIR funds to cover items that the federal funds cannot cover, such as applying for our first-ever patent, which has now become four international patents, and expanding our workforce development efforts through paid internships. In fact, all SEL full-time employees (three of which are University of Hawai`i graduates) were hired and received technical and career training through our internship program with support from HTDC programming and funds.

Additionally, our SBIR and HSBIR funding made it possible to afford a deeper level of community engagement with the West O`ahu community which resulted in the successful approval and publication of the environmental assessment for the Aloha Sustainable Materials Recycling and Fertilizer Facility (Aloha SMRFF) - a small manufacturing plant we are designing in Campbell Industrial Park to divert over 200 tons per day of construction & demolition waste from landfilling, which along with invasive and pest infested green waste will be converted into fuel and fertilizer for Hawai`i. We have found the requirement to match funding to federal funds awards in the HSBIR program is excellent for leveraging federal agency technical expertise while maintaining a level playing field.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure, and urge your support for this bill.

Sincerely,



Marie-Joelle Simonpietri
President

[About Simonpietri Enterprises LLC](#)

Simonpietri Enterprises is a Kailua, Hawaii-based woman- and veteran-owned small business with ten employees, focused on technical innovation and first-of-kind project development of emerging clean and renewable technologies. Since founding in 2006, we have helped dozens of small and large industrial companies in Hawaii, the continental U.S., Australia, and Canada improve the environmental and economic sustainability of their operations through technical and business advice in renewable

energy conversion, waste reduction and re-use, and greenhouse gas lifecycle impact reduction. Simonpietri Enterprises' founder and employees have participated in the strategy, planning, design, financing, development, construction, and energy efficiency/greenhouse gas reduction/sustainability renovation for over \$400 million in new renewable and first-of-kind sustainable fuel projects over the past 15 years. Since launching the Aloha Carbon waste-to-fuel technical development process in August 2020, Simonpietri Enterprises is now developing renewable fuel production facilities in its own right, starting with the Aloha Sustainable Materials Recycling and Fertilizer Facility (SMRFF) in Kapolei, Hawaii to divert wastes generated in Honolulu from landfilling and transform it to renewable fuel, organic fertilizer, and recycled-material building products.



Blue Startups

55 Merchant Street, Suite 1700
Honolulu, HI 96813

To be presented to the EDT Committee on
Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 1:00 PM

Regarding **HB1613 HD1**:
“Relating to the Hawai‘i Technology Development Corporation”

Testimony in Support

Date: March 16, 2026

From: Chenoa Farnsworth
Managing Director, Blue Startups
chenoa@bluestartups.com

Committee on Economic Development and Tourism (EDT):

Chair Senator Lynn DeCoite,
Vice Chair Senator Glenn Wakai,
and esteemed members of the Committee

Aloha,

My name is Chenoa Farnsworth, and I am the Managing Director at Blue Startups. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **strong support of HB 1613**.

Blue Startups was founded to help diversify Hawai‘i’s economy by building a stronger technology sector. For the last **12 years, we’ve supported entrepreneurs** with mentorship, business expertise, product validation, investor introductions, and seed funding.

Our work depends on a **connected statewide innovation ecosystem**. That ecosystem improves when HTDC has the capacity to deliver programs and communicate opportunities.

HB 1613 appropriates funds for HTDC to establish one **Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist** and one **Marketing and Branding Specialist**.

This is a targeted, cost-effective capacity investment. It helps HTDC execute its statutory mandate to grow the technology industry, support startups, encourage commercialization, coordinate statewide innovation, and **promote Hawai‘i as a location for tech-based economic activity**.

Marketing and Branding drive participation and investment in Hawai'i.

A dedicated **Marketing and Branding Specialist** is the **front door for Hawai'i's innovation economy**. Clear outreach increases awareness and adoption of programs, facilities, and events that already exist. It helps founders and employers find resources faster. It helps investors, partners, and talent understand how to engage.

For an accelerator like Blue Startups, stronger statewide marketing means more startup founders. It means more local companies connect to mentors and investors. It means more outside capital and strategic partners see credible deal flow and infrastructure in Hawai'i.

HB 1613 strengthens Hawai'i's innovation economy by ensuring HTDC can deliver specialized support and clearly communicate opportunities to the people and companies who need them.

We respectfully urge the Committee to **pass HB 1613** and advance it with a **recommendation of support**.

Mahalo,

Chenoa Farnsworth
Managing Director
Blue Startups



Statement of
Doreen Wong
Ocean Technology and Innovation Advisor
before the
Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

LATE

Tuesday, March 17, 2026
1:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HB1613 HD1 RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Chair DeCoite and Vice Chair Wakai and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism,

I, Doreen Wong, an ocean technology and innovation advisor, **SUPPORT HB1613 HD1**, which appropriates funds to establish Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist, and Marketing and Branding Specialist positions within Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC). These roles are essential for advancing Hawaii's technology and innovation economy, strengthening our state's sustainable blue economy (ocean-based economy), and supporting the growth of advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity.

Hawaii's manufacturing sector is underrepresented, accounting for just 2.3% of state GDP compared to the U.S. average of 11%, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis](#). HTDC can help local businesses adopt Industry 4.0 technologies, strengthen supply chains, and protect against cyber threats. In 2021 alone, [an FBI Internet Crime report estimated](#) that cyberattacks cost U.S. businesses over \$6.9 billion.

With 14 years of experience working at the intersection of technology innovation, policy, and finance across global, regional, and local levels, I have spent the past years advising NOAA-funded Ocean Enterprise Accelerators and collaborating with HTDC and the University of Hawaii to catalyze Hawaii's local technology and innovation ecosystem. Hawaii has significant potential but needs this kind of talent and support to attract funding and resources from federal, philanthropic, and private investment. Strategic state investment in technology innovation, advanced manufacturing, and workforce development can help double economic returns. We've seen this demonstrated in regions like San Diego, Washington, New England (e.g., Rhode Island), and Canada. As UHERO's recent report, [Is Hawaii Being Left Behind?](#) notes, meaningful improvements in productivity and innovation are critical for the long-term future of the state's economic resiliency.

I urge you to support **HB1613 HD1** to help grow our local technology and innovation economy and create future-ready jobs for our residents. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Doreen Wong