

Written Statement of
Trung Lam, Executive Director

before the
House Committee on Finance

Monday, March 2, 2026
2:00 pm
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HB1613
RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 House Committee on Finance
Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair**

**Monday, March 2, 2026, at 2:00PM
Conference Room 308 & Videoconference**

RE: HB1613 HD1 Relating to the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation

Aloha e Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, 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 Finance

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

Testimony in Support

Date: February 28, 2026

To:

Committee on Finance:

Chair Rep. Chris Todd,
Vice Chair Rep. Jenna Takenouchi,
and esteemed members of the Committee

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

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**.

“Oihana” means “business” in Hawaiian. 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

HB-1613-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 12:55:07 PM

Testimony for FIN on 3/2/2026 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paolo Vidali	Hidden Gears LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Statement of

Paolo Vidali

CEO

Hidden Gears LLC

before the

House Committee on Finance

Monday, March 2, 2026

2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of

HB1613 HD1

RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance.

Hidden Gears strongly **SUPPORTS** HB1613 HD1, which appropriates funds to establish Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist and Marketing and Branding Specialist positions within HTDC. These roles are critical to advancing Hawaii's position as a technology innovation leader in the Pacific, particularly in the blue economy, advanced manufacturing, and cybersecurity sectors.

The addition of an Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist aligns directly with HTDC's mission to foster economic growth through technology. Hawaii's manufacturing sector, while growing, remains underrepresented compared to national averages, accounting for just 2.3% of state GDP versus the U.S. average of 11%. By investing in advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity expertise, HTDC can better support local companies in adopting Industry 4.0 technologies, improving supply chain resilience, and mitigating the increasing threat of cyberattacks—a threat that cost U.S. businesses over \$6.9 billion in 2021 alone, according to the FBI.

Hawaii is uniquely positioned to be a part of a growing cybersecurity economy, which should not be ignored. Investing in this via HTDC which supports the private sector in key innovation is very important.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.



Small Kine Farm

PO Box 600, Kailua, HI 96734

808-262-2724

smallkinefarm@gmail.com

www.smallkinefarm.com

Statement of
Fung Yang President Small Kine Farm
before the
ECD

Monday, Mar 2nd, 2026

2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of

HB1613

RELATING TO HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Chair Ilgan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee.

Small Kine Farm **supports** HB1613 that appropriates monies to HTDC for positions in support of Advanced Manufacturing, Cybersecurity, and Marketing/Branding within HTDC.

HTDC core programs develop infrastructure, capital, and talent to facilitate the development of technology and manufacturing jobs in Hawai'i. Following their mission, HTDC programs aim to provide technical and financial support for innovative small businesses from the startup stage through growth and export.

My company is the only USDA Certified organic mushroom farm in the State. HTDC has helped us to start and stay competitive from the very beginning. I am hoping to see more small businesses who can benefit from their help with more staff and more funding. They are playing an important role in our economy. I am currently employing 5 full time and 1 part time workers at the farm. Last year revenue was \$350,000.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.



WaiHome LLC
59-477 Hoalike Road
Haleiwa, HI, 96712

Statement of
Gregory Wong
Co-Founder and Engineer
WaiHome LLC
before the
House Committee on Finance

Monday, March 2nd, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HB1613
RELATING TO HAWAI'I TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

To: Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee Finance

WaiHome LLC strongly **SUPPORTS** HB1613 HD1, which appropriates funds to establish Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist and Marketing and Branding Specialist positions within HTDC. These roles are critical to advancing Hawaii's position as a technology innovation leader in the Pacific, particularly in the blue economy, advanced manufacturing, and cybersecurity sectors.

The addition of an Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist aligns directly with HTDC's mission to foster economic growth through technology. Hawaii's manufacturing sector, while growing, remains underrepresented compared to national averages, accounting for just 2.3% of state GDP versus the U.S. average of 11%. By investing in advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity expertise, HTDC can better support local companies in adopting Industry 4.0 technologies, improving supply chain resilience, and mitigating the increasing threat of cyberattacks—a threat that cost U.S. businesses over \$6.9 billion in 2021 alone.

WaiHome has directly benefited from HTDC's advanced manufacturing workshops, and I strongly urge the committee to support HB1613. Through these programs, **WaiHome has successfully integrated advanced manufacturing techniques into the production of our local wastewater treatment systems.** This has not only significantly reduced our manufacturing costs but has also enabled us to create high-skilled technology jobs within the state. **Supporting this bill is a strategic investment in Hawaii's future; by fostering industries beyond tourism,** we can build a more resilient, diversified economy for generations to come.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Wong".

Gregory Wong
Co-founder and Engineer
WaiHome LLC



Blue Startups

55 Merchant Street, Suite 1700
Honolulu, HI 96813

To be presented to the FIN Committee on
Monday, March 2, 2026 at 2:00 PM

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

Testimony in Support

Date: February 28, 2026

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

Committee on Finance:

Chair Rep. Chris Todd,
Vice Chair Rep. Jenna Takenouchi,
and esteemed members of the Committee

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

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 on Finance to **pass HB 1613** and advance it with a **recommendation of support**.

Mahalo,

Chenoa Farnsworth
Managing Director
Blue Startups





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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 Finance
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 2, 2026
TIME: 2pm

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.



Blue Startups

55 Merchant Street, Suite 1700
Honolulu, HI 96813

To be presented to the FIN Committee on
Monday, March 2, 2026 at 2:00 PM

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

Testimony in Support

Date: March 1, 2026

From: David Holt
Program Director, Blue Startups
david@bluestartups.com

Committee on Finance:
Chair Rep. Chris Todd,
Vice Chair Rep. Jenna Takenouchi,
and esteemed members of the Committee

Aloha Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee,

My name is David Holt, and I am the Program 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 on Finance to **pass HB 1613** and advance it with a **recommendation of support**.

Mahalo,

David Holt
Program Director
Blue Startups



ThriveHI

111 Hekili Street
Kailua, HI 96734



To be presented to the
Committee on Finance
Monday, March 2, 2026

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

Testimony in Support

Date: February 28, 2026

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

To: Chair Rep. Chris Todd,
Vice Chair Rep. Jenna Takenouchi,
and 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 HB 1613.

ThriveHI supports HB 1613, 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. The bill requests a total of \$200,000 for FY 2026 to 2027.

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.

HB 1613 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 on Economic Development and Technology to pass HB 1613.

Mahalo,

Zack Hernandez

Zack Hernandez
Executive Director
ThriveHI



Statement of
Bernard Mendez
Co-Founder
Black Sand Solutions LLC
before the
House Committee on Finance

Monday, March 2, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HB1613 HD1
RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance.

Black Sand Solutions LLC strongly SUPPORTS HB1613 HD1, which appropriates funds to establish Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist and Marketing and Branding Specialist positions within HTDC. These roles are critical to advancing Hawaii's position as a technology innovation leader in the Pacific, particularly in the blue economy, advanced manufacturing, and cybersecurity sectors.

The addition of an Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist aligns directly with HTDC's mission to foster economic growth through technology. Hawaii's manufacturing sector, while growing, remains underrepresented compared to national averages, accounting for just 2.3% of state GDP versus the U.S. average of 11%. By investing in advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity expertise, HTDC can better support local companies in adopting Industry 4.0 technologies, improving supply chain resilience, and mitigating the increasing threat of cyberattacks—a threat that cost U.S. businesses over \$6.9 billion in 2021 alone, according to the FBI.

Black Sand Solutions LLC builds secure AI enabled software, DevOps infrastructure, and conducts scientific research for space and defense industries. An Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist within HTDC would give local startups and manufacturers a trusted resource to navigate cybersecurity requirements and adopt modern automation and Industry 4.0 practices. This kind of technical assistance reduces friction for companies trying to sell into regulated markets and improves the resilience of Hawaii's growing innovation ecosystem. The Marketing and Branding Specialist role is also critical. Many small businesses are unaware of HTDC resources or how to engage with programs effectively. Improved outreach, clearer program messaging, and stronger partner networks would increase participation and accelerate commercialization across the islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.



Statement of
Valerie Harmon
Founder and CEO
Namaka Algae, Inc.
before the
House Committee on Finance

Monday, March 2, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of
HB 1613
RELATING TO THE HAWAII' I TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance.

Namaka Algae, Inc. strongly **SUPPORTS** HB 1613, which appropriates funds to establish Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist and Marketing and Branding Specialist positions within HTDC. These roles are critical to advancing Hawaii's position as a technology innovation leader in the Pacific, particularly in the blue economy, advanced manufacturing, and cybersecurity sectors.

The addition of an Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist aligns directly with HTDC's mission to foster economic growth through technology. Hawaii's manufacturing sector, while growing, remains underrepresented compared to national averages, accounting for just 2.3% of state GDP versus the U.S. average of 11%. By investing in advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity expertise, HTDC can better support local companies in adopting Industry 4.0 technologies, improving supply chain resilience, and mitigating the increasing threat of cyberattacks—a threat that cost U.S. businesses over \$6.9 billion in 2021 alone, according to the FBI.

Namaka Algae, Inc. is a technology first company focused on low-cost algae biomass for fish superfoods. We produce in Hawaii for Hawaii markets and plan to expand to the US mainland and globally for larger market access and profitability. Aquaculture has the potential to provide efficient, low carbon footprint protein to feed our growing populations, and at Namaka we aim to support the growth of this industry by providing quality, reliable and nutritious feed ingredients made from microalgae. We support HTDCs programs which benefit our company greatly. The focus on Marine and Ocean tech and industries is vital to continue



the growth and expansion of our industries to support job growth, and ultimately improved food security for our Islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Aloha,

Valerie Harmon



Hawaii Tech Week

435 Puamamane Street
Honolulu, Hawaii 96821

To be presented to the
Committee on Finance
Monday, March 2, 2026

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

Testimony in Support

Date: February 28, 2026

From: Michael Bennett
Founder, Hawaii Tech Week
aloha@honolulutechweek.com

To: Chair Rep. Chris Todd,
Vice Chair Rep. Jenna Takenouchi,
and Members of the Committee,

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members,

My name is Michael Bennett, and I am the Founder of Hawai‘i Tech Week (HTW), formerly Honolulu Tech Week. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1613.

Hawai‘i Tech Week is an annual week of events where the local and global tech community connects to build relationships, level up, and create opportunity. Events are independently hosted by companies and leaders and include panels, mixers, product launches, workshops, and more. Our mission is to accelerate tech talent, capital, and adoption to elevate our people, grow Hawai‘i’s economy, and impact the world.

HB 1613 helps the Hawai‘i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) by paying for two full-time staff jobs for the 2026–2027 budget year: especially to support marketing and branding.

HTW exists to be a platform that amplifies the ecosystem, while hosting a few anchor events during the week. We grow audience and media reach through the year, market the week and coordinate the calendar, and channel demand to the calendar and website to benefit event hosts and sponsors. That means we see the difference between “resources exist” and “people can actually find and use them.”



A dedicated marketing and branding specialist at HTDC is a high-leverage front door for Hawai'i's innovation economy. This role increases awareness and utilization of HTDC programs and facilities. It helps founders, students, employers, investors, and partners understand what exists and how to engage. It also supports statewide participation across all islands through consistent outreach. Externally, it helps Hawai'i tell a clear, credible story that attracts and retains talent and investment.

The advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity specialist strengthens the practical foundation for growth and resilience. Cybersecurity readiness is now required to protect operations, win customers, and scale. Advanced manufacturing capability supports prototyping, iteration, and local capacity. Together, these functions help create higher-quality jobs, strengthen startups and small businesses, and improve Hawai'i's economic resilience.

HTW OUTCOMES SHOW WHY ECOSYSTEM "CONNECTIVE TISSUE" MATTERS

When HTW wins, the ecosystem wins. Founded in 2024, HTW 2025 featured 60+ events across 25 venues and 3,000+ attendees, drawing from a network of 4,500+ people across Hawai'i and 50 cities globally, from San Francisco to Singapore. HTW fosters new relationships, hires, investments, partnerships, and showcases Hawai'i's growing role in the global tech economy.



Examples of outcomes that HTW has been a meeting point or catalyst for include:

- A Hawai'i startup launches and raises its first angel check
- Dozens of hires and internships across startups and industry
- Millions of dollars in venture and LP investments
- Hundreds of thousands in new revenue for Hawai'i's economy
- Kama'āina abroad plugging into the local ecosystem
- New mentors for Native Hawaiian STEM scholars
- A tech nonprofit recruits its founding Board of Directors
- Hundreds of thousands of positive impressions for Hawai'i tech



HB 1613 supports the same pathway at scale. It helps people discover programs, participate, and convert activity into outcomes.

HAWAI'I OUTCOMES THIS BILL ADVANCES

HB 1613 supports statewide outcomes that matter:

- Jobs: stronger pipelines into higher-wage roles and increased hiring through a healthier innovation ecosystem
- Diversification: greater tech adoption and commercialization across multiple industries
- Resilience: improved cybersecurity capacity and stronger local production and prototyping capability
- Talent and investment attraction: clearer messaging and easier engagement for external capital and returning talent
- Statewide impact: consistent outreach and participation across all islands



In conclusion, HB 1613 strengthens Hawai'i's innovation economy by ensuring HTDC has the specialized capacity to execute its mandate and connect more people to the resources already available. We respectfully urge the Committee to pass HB 1613 with a recommendation of support and advance it through the remaining referrals.

Mahalo,

Michael Bennett
Founder, Hawai'i Tech Week



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

Position: **Support**

To Representative Chris Todd, Chair; Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee on Finance:

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.

Statement of
Jesse Rodriguez
Founder
NeuroMuse LLC
before the
House Committee on Finance

Monday, March 2, 2026

2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In consideration of

HB1613 HD1

RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance.

NeuroMuse LLC strongly SUPPORTS HB1613 HD1, which appropriates funds to establish Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist and Marketing and Branding Specialist positions within HTDC. These roles are critical to advancing Hawaii's position as a technology innovation leader in the Pacific, particularly in the blue economy, advanced manufacturing, and cybersecurity sectors.

The addition of an Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist aligns directly with HTDC's mission to foster economic growth through technology. Hawaii's manufacturing sector, while growing, remains underrepresented compared to national averages, accounting for just 2.3% of state GDP versus the U.S. average of 11%. By investing in advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity expertise, HTDC can better support local companies in adopting Industry 4.0 technologies, improving supply chain resilience,

and mitigating the increasing threat of cyberattacks—a threat that cost U.S. businesses over \$6.9 billion in 2021 alone, according to the FBI.

NeuroMuse LLC is a Hawai'i-based technology company developing advanced augmented reality (AR) smartglass platforms and workforce innovation tools through the ELARA™ system and MuseOS™ platform. Our work focuses on workforce training, emergency response, logistics, healthcare support, and STEM education applications that align directly with Hawai'i's innovation and economic diversification goals.

HTDC programs and SBIR matching support are critical for small technology companies like ours to compete for federal research funding. These programs enable local startups to remain in Hawai'i while building high-technology solutions, creating skilled workforce opportunities, and collaborating with local educational institutions such as Kapi'olani Community College and University of Hawai'i partners.

Through participation in SBIR pathways and workforce development initiatives, NeuroMuse LLC is actively engaging Hawai'i students in applied engineering, prototyping, and advanced manufacturing experiences leading up to public demonstrations and workforce training events. Support for HB1613 HD1 strengthens Hawai'i's innovation ecosystem by helping local companies transition research into real-world products, attract federal investment, and create future-ready jobs within the state.

For these reasons, NeuroMuse LLC strongly supports HB1613 HD1 and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.



Statement of
Isar Mostafanezhad, Ph.D.
Founder & CEO
Nalu Scientific, LLC

Before the
House Committee on Finance

Monday, March 2, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

In Consideration of
HB1613 HD1
RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance:

Nalu Scientific, LLC strongly SUPPORTS HB1613 HD1, which appropriates funds to establish Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist and Marketing and Branding Specialist positions within the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC).

As a Honolulu-based semiconductor and advanced electronics company, Nalu Scientific develops high-speed integrated circuits and radiation detection systems for medical imaging, aerospace, national security, and scientific research applications. Our work requires precision manufacturing processes, secure data systems, and strong commercialization support to compete in global markets.

The addition of an Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist within HTDC is critical to strengthening Hawaii's innovation ecosystem. Advanced manufacturing capability directly impacts our ability to scale hardware development, improve production readiness, and maintain competitiveness against mainland firms with greater infrastructure access. Cybersecurity support is equally essential, particularly as technology companies increasingly serve federal, defense, and research customers that require strict compliance and secure system architecture.

Equally important is the establishment of a Marketing and Branding Specialist to elevate Hawaii's technology sector visibility. Many high-technology companies operating in Hawaii compete nationally and internationally yet lack coordinated state-level branding support.



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ENABLING INNOVATION

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Strengthening Hawaii's technology identity will improve capital attraction, partnership development, and workforce recruitment.

Investment in these positions supports economic diversification, high-wage job growth, and the long-term sustainability of Hawaii's innovation-driven companies.

Nalu Scientific respectfully urges the Committee to pass HB1316 HD1.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Statement of
Doreen Wong
Ocean Technology and Innovation Advisor
before the
Committee on Finance

Monday, March 2, 2026
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 & Videoconference

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

Chair Todd, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and Members of the Committee on Finance,

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 targeted support to realize its full potential 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. The time for Hawaii is **now**. 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
Ocean Technology and Innovation Advisor



March 2, 2026

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Rep. Chris Todd, Chair; Rep. Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair; and Committee Members
Public Hearing, March 2, 2026, 2:00 p.m. – Conference Room 308, State Capitol

**Testimony of William F. Anonsen, Managing Partner/Principal of The Maritime Group
In Support of H.B. 1613 HD1, Relating to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation**

My name is William F. Anonsen, Managing Partner/Principal of The Maritime Group and a Councilmember of the Hawai'i Pacific Export Council (HPEC). I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of H.B. 1613, H.D. 1, which appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to establish Advanced Manufacturing and Cybersecurity Specialist and Marketing and Branding Specialist positions.

The Legislature has already recognized the strategic importance of advanced manufacturing and cybersecurity to Hawai'i's economic resilience, workforce development, and national competitiveness. With the termination of federal Manufacturing Extension Partnership funding, HTDC no longer has sufficient internal capacity to sustain and expand these initiatives statewide. This measure restores that critical expertise.

From an export and economic diversification perspective, this bill is both timely and practical. Advanced manufacturing supports higher-wage technical jobs, strengthens local supply chains, and enables value-added exports in sectors such as ocean technology, renewable energy, aerospace, and defense-adjacent industries. Cybersecurity readiness is now essential for federal contracting, global partnerships, and participation in modern digital supply chains.

Advanced manufacturing supports higher-wage jobs, export growth, and supply-chain resilience. Cybersecurity readiness is essential for federal contracting and participation in global markets. A dedicated marketing and branding function will improve statewide engagement, attract investment and talent, and strengthen Hawai'i's innovation profile. Your House ECD has suggested \$100K per position, a modest, targeted investment with meaningful economic returns.

This measure represents a targeted investment in human capacity, the connective infrastructure needed to translate legislative intent into measurable outcomes: higher-wage jobs, stronger exports, improved cybersecurity readiness, and a more resilient, diversified economy. For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to pass H.B. 1613, H.D. 1, and advance it with a recommendation of support.

Respectfully submitted,

William F. Anonsen

William F. Anonsen
Managing Partner/Principal
THE MARITIME GROUP