



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

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

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

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY**

Friday, February 13, 2026
8:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of
HB1863
RELATING TO AN HONORARY AMBASSADOR TO CANADA

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent of **HB1863** to establish an **Honorary Ambassador to Canada** for the State of Hawai'i.

While national-level tensions have complicated U.S.–Canada relations, Hawai'i has always maintained its own distinct cultural identity and global relationships. This role allows us to preserve and strengthen those connections in a way that is fully consistent with state authority and respectful of federal boundaries.

Canada is one of Hawai'i's most important partners. It is a top visitor market, a key source of investment, and a collaborator in areas like renewable energy, ocean science, and Indigenous cultural exchange. An Honorary Ambassador would provide a stable point of contact for Canadian businesses, universities, and communities who value Hawai'i's unique voice—especially during periods of federal uncertainty.

The Ambassador would focus on three core areas: **business and trade**, to expand opportunities for local companies; **support on-going tourism efforts**, to attract a reliable and respectful visitor market; and **cultural and educational exchange**, to deepen ties between Native Hawaiian and First Nations communities, attract students from Canada to study in Hawaii, and vice-versa.

This is a low-cost, high-impact way for Hawai'i to maintain goodwill, economic stability, and cultural partnership with one of our closest international neighbors.

To operate such an honorary program but with programmatic activities and deliverables, DBEDT requires an annual appropriation of \$72,500, which would include:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. Honorary representative remuneration | \$20,000 |
| 2. Travel expenses | \$20,000 |
| 3. Programmatic expenses | \$25,000 |
| 4. Budget & Finance restrictions | \$7,500 |

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

HB-1863

Submitted on: 2/10/2026 9:35:07 PM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Johnnie-Mae L. Perry	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Johnnie-Mae L. Perry OPPOSE

1863 HB RELATING TO AN HONORARY AMBASSADOR TO CANADA.

WILL THIS LOWER THE TARIFF EMPOSED BY TRUMP?

HB-1863

Submitted on: 2/12/2026 8:03:02 AM

Testimony for ECD on 2/13/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michael Olderr	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

With how lawless our president has been, with alienating our allies and covering up sex crimes, it's important that we do everything in our power to maintain stability on the world stage in spite of how our federal leaders are acting.