



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

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

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Statement of
DENNIS T. LING
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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
HB2474
RELATING TO INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) strongly supports **HB2474**, which seeks to broaden Hawai'i's authority to enter nonbinding international cooperative agreements. This measure goes beyond traditional sister-state partnerships by enabling collaboration with national governments, ministries, and regional organizations throughout the Asia-Pacific.

In today's interconnected world, challenges such as agriculture and food security, biosecurity, climate resilience, indigenous knowledge preservation, education, renewable energy, and economic development cannot be addressed in isolation. They demand coordinated action across borders and sectors. HB2474 provides Hawai'i with the flexibility to engage quickly and strategically with international partners while maintaining constitutional safeguards. These agreements are nonbinding, create no enforceable obligations, and do not constitute treaties, ensuring compliance with federal and state law.

By adopting this measure, Hawai'i will strengthen global partnerships, accelerate innovation, and position itself as a leader in sustainability, cultural exchange, and economic resilience. Expanding our ability to collaborate internationally will help attract investment, share best practices, and amplify Hawai'i's voice on issues that matter most to our communities and future generations.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.