



STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

Date: 03/02/2026
Time: 02:00 PM
Location: 308 VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE
Committee: FIN

Department: Education

Person Testifying: Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

Title of Bill: HB2545, HD1, RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

Purpose of Bill: Requires the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation to establish the Small Business Innovation Research Matching Program. Requires the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation, in collaboration with the Department of Education, to establish a STEM education outreach program. Requires and appropriates funds for the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation to develop an economic diversification strategic plan. Appropriates funds for economic diversification and defense ecosystem development. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

Department's Position:

The Hawai'i State Department of Education (Department) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2545 HD1. This bill directs the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation to establish a STEM education outreach program to be conducted in collaboration with the Department, including coordination to schedule presentations and identify appropriate schools and grade levels.

Efforts that increase student awareness of STEM careers and programs of study can help build meaningful connections between classroom learning and workforce pathways in our state. The Department appreciates the intent of the bill and encourages continued clarity regarding roles, expectations, and implementation support as the measure advances. Presentations during the instructional day should support student learning and minimize disruption to core instruction.

The Department defers to the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation regarding the implementation of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

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
HB2545

RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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

As the state agency dedicated to advancing Hawai'i's innovation ecosystem, the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) recognizes HB2545 HD1 as a critical step toward strengthening the state's technology sector and diversifying its economy. The bill's focus on supporting small business innovation, STEM education, and comprehensive economic planning aligns directly with HTDC's mission to position Hawai'i as a leading hub for technology development, particularly in the space and ocean sectors.

HSBIR, MAP, and Accelerator are core programs of HTDC aimed at supporting research and development, commercialization, and training for growing companies in technology and innovation industries.

HTDC suggests that companies applying for match must meet additional criteria than what is currently in the bill. We recommend including in subsection (b), the requirements listed below which are already included in our current program:

- Be registered to do business in Hawai'i
- Be compliant in Hawai'i Compliance Express (HCE)
- Have project work done in Hawai'i
- Agree to complete NIST MEP and HTDC impact metrics surveys

In addition, we ask that approval period be extended from 30 days to 60 days to provide enough time to review all SBIR submissions during the application period.

HTDC respectfully urges the Committee to include the above recommended changes and to pass HB2545.



Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation
521 Ala Moana Blvd, Ste 255 | 808-539-3806
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 | www.htdc.org

Mahalo for this 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: HB2545 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 2545 House Draft 1 (HB2545 HD1), which requires the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to establish the Small Business Innovation Research Matching Program; requires the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation, in collaboration with the Department of Education, to establish a STEM education outreach program; requires and appropriates funds for the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to develop an economic diversification strategic plan; and appropriates funds for economic diversification and defense ecosystem development.

HB2545 HD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Small Business. By establishing the SBIR Matching Program, the state can continue to help these important innovation companies grow scale and retain local talent. Access to capital is a consistent barrier to growth for our small business. Access to capital remains top priority for the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii's Small Business policy pillar. HTDC's efforts at economic diversification and small business support have yielded significant financial return and continue to be an attractive investment by the state.

The Chamber strongly supports the education component of this legislation, requiring recipients of SBIR match funds to work in collaboration with UH to provide presentations to public school students showcasing their work in innovation and technology development. Encouragement towards these careers is crucial for retaining our local workforce and carrying the momentum of state investments in research and development. This component of the legislation increases the states return of investment for SBIR, with feedback loops enriching public school education and workforce development.

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 2545 House Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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info@hawaiiifood.com

Executive Officers

Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Chair*
Jayson Watts, Mahi Pono, *Vice Chair*
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Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
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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: HB2545 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 for the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to establish the Small Business Innovation Research Matching Program, for to establish a STEM education outreach program and to develop an economic diversification strategic plan

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.

These new HTDC programs can help small businesses in our state grow and thrive. Research, innovation, and STEM education will create and stronger more diverse economy for Hawaii. We urge the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKAI

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

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Statement of
LAURIE MCALLISTER MOORE
Executive Director
Military and Community Relations Office
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Monday, March 2, 2026
2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 308
TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB2545 HD1

RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

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

On behalf of the Military and Community Relations Office (MACRO) within the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, I respectfully submit testimony in **strong support** of this measure.

As the HTDC's small business innovation research program has demonstrated quantitative success, MACRO supports HB2545 HD1 as it will utilize the Small Business Innovation Research Matching Program to establish STEM outreach and mandate a strategic plan for diversification – both of which are critical to Hawai'i's economy and security.

Section II(b) removes additional state-level technical reviews for companies that have already cleared the rigorous federal approval process, which will act as a fast-track approach, allowing local innovators to work at a more efficient pace.

The requirement for HTDC to develop an economic diversification strategic plan is timely. Hawai'i's unique geography and military presence offer a competitive advantage in the global innovation economy. By integrating STEM outreach with the Department of Education, we ensure that the high-wage jobs created by this bill will be filled by Hawai'i's own residents, fostering a sustainable local workforce to keep our keiki home.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Written Statement of
DR. PATRICK SULLIVAN
FOUNDER & CEO, OCEANIT

Before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Monday, March 2, 2026
2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308 and Videoconference

In Support of
**HB2545 HD1 RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION**

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

From: Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Founder & CEO

Re: Testimony in Support of HB2545 HD1

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

Oceanit Laboratories, Inc. strongly supports HB2545 HD1, which establishes a permanent \$5 million appropriation for Hawai'i's Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) matching program. For over 40 years, Oceanit has been a Hawai'i-based technology and innovation company, developing solutions in defense, energy, healthcare, and infrastructure. We have direct experience with federal SBIR awards and understand how critical state matching support is for growing innovation companies and creating high-wage jobs here in Hawai'i.

The Economic Opportunity. Hawai'i's economy faces significant headwinds: UHERO projects slow growth in 2026 with declining tourism and federal workforce reductions. Economic diversification is not optional; it is essential. The federal SBIR program, often called "America's Seed Fund," offers a proven pathway. Unlike venture capital, which concentrates in established tech hubs, SBIR awards are merit-based and available to any qualified small business nationwide. The National Academies of Sciences found that states underserved by venture capital, like Hawai'i, benefit disproportionately from SBIR programs. Federal SBIR/STTR programs distribute over \$4 billion annually. This bill helps Hawai'i companies compete for those dollars.

Proven Results: Hawai'i has operated the nation's longest-running state SBIR matching program since 1988, 37 years of proven performance. In FY25, the program's \$1.5 million state investment leveraged \$13.22 million in federal SBIR awards. That funding supported 144 jobs in Hawai'i, with 62% paying over \$80,000

annually. The National Academies documented that SBIR firms attract more than four dollars in additional federal R&D funding for every dollar invested, and firms receiving state matching support show higher rates of follow-on federal contracts, patent generation, and successful technology commercialization.

The Problem: The program works, but it is severely underfunded. Current funding means Phase II and Phase III companies, those closest to commercialization and large-scale job creation, receive only 25% of the matching support the program is designed to provide. In FY25, five applicants received no funding at all. Companies that could create high-wage jobs in Hawai'i are being turned away or underfunded because the state appropriation cannot meet demand.

What HB2545 HD1 Does: This bill provides \$5 million as a permanent annual appropriation, enough to fully fund current applicants at program caps while maintaining modest capacity for growth. Critically, the bill streamlines administration by eliminating duplicative state technical review. Companies that have already won competitive federal SBIR awards have demonstrated technical and business merit through a rigorous federal evaluation process; requiring a second state-level review adds delay without value. The bill also establishes pro-rata distribution when demand exceeds funds, ensuring all eligible applicants receive support.

Investing in the Next Generation: HB2545 HD1 requires grant recipients to deliver two STEM education presentations annually to Hawai'i public school students through a new HTDC-DOE partnership. At \$5 million funding with approximately 20-30 recipient companies, this generates 40-60 school presentations per year. This outreach shows students that high-wage innovation careers exist right here at home, building the workforce pipeline Hawai'i's technology sector needs to grow.

This legislation represents a commitment to building an economy based on ideas, innovation, and intellectual capital. It is a smart, proven investment with clear accountability measures and meaningful returns.

Oceanit urges the committee to pass HB2545 HD1.



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

HB2545

RELATING TO HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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

Small Kine Farm **supports** HB2545 that appropriates monies to HTDC for positions in support of HTDC to establish the SBIR Matching Program. Requires the HTDC, in collaboration with the Department of Education, to establish a STEM education outreach program. Requires and appropriates funds for the HTDC to develop an economic diversification strategic plan. Appropriates funds for economic diversification and defense ecosystem development.

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.

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
HB2545
RELATING TO HAWAI'I TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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

WaiHome LLC **SUPPORTS** HB2545 HD1 that appropriates funds for HTDC's core programs: the Manufacturing Assistance Program (MAP), Hawai'i Small Business Innovation Research (HSBIR), and Small Business Training & Accelerator programs. These programs have demonstrated value in nurturing local startups, supporting commercialization of research, and expanding opportunities for skilled employment in emerging industries. These HTDC programs aim to provide programmatic business, technical, and financial support for innovative small businesses from the startup stage through growth and export.

As a direct result of these HTDC programs, WaiHome has been able to:

- Create 4 high-skilled technical jobs from the local workforce;
- Establish a physical office and laboratory space in Hawaii;
- Bridge the critical funding gap between our Phase I and Phase II federal grants from the NSF and NOAA.

Moving forward, we rely on these grants to transition from a research-focused startup to a full-scale manufacturing and wastewater service company. This transition is vital to ensuring Hawaii has locally-produced, cost-effective solutions to meet our 2050 cesspool conversion mandate. Investing in these core HTDC programs is an investment in Hawaii's environmental and economic resilience.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.



Gregory Wong
Co-founder and Engineer
WaiHome LLC



AI.FISH

TO: Representative Todd, Chair, Committee on Finance
Representative Takenouchi, Vice Chair, Committee on Finance
FROM: Jimmy Freese, CEO, Ai.Fish
RE: H.B. 2545 HD1 – Relating to Hawai‘i Technology Development Corporation
HEARING DATE: March 2, 2026

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

I am Jimmy Freese, CEO of Ai.Fish, a Hawai‘i-based ocean technology company that uses AI-powered computer vision and electronic monitoring systems for fisheries management and marine conservation. Ai.Fish strongly supports HB2545 HD1.

The SBIR Matching Program is one of the most effective tools Hawai‘i has for turning federal research dollars into local economic growth. In 2024, twenty-seven Hawai‘i companies receiving \$2.5 million in state matching funds leveraged approximately \$33 million in federal awards — a return of more than thirteen dollars for every state dollar invested. That is the kind of multiplier that directly creates high-wage jobs and keeps innovation companies rooted in Hawai‘i.

Ai.Fish has benefited directly from HTDC’s SBIR support over more than seven years. That partnership has helped us compete for federal funding, advance our AI-based fisheries monitoring technology, and grow our team with local talent — including University of Hawai‘i graduates. We work closely with the Hawai‘i Longline Association and export our technology worldwide, but our headquarters and our commitment remain in Hawai‘i. The SBIR matching program is a key reason companies like ours can stay and scale here rather than relocating to the mainland.

We also welcome the bill’s STEM education outreach provisions. Ai.Fish regularly engages with students and educators to demonstrate how ocean science and technology careers can thrive in Hawai‘i. Connecting SBIR recipients with public school classrooms is a practical way to inspire the next generation of innovators and show students that high-tech career paths exist right here at home.

We urge the Committee to pass HB2545 HD1. Mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Freese
CEO and Co-Founder
Ai.Fish



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 **HB2545**:
"Relating to the Hawaii 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 **support of HB2545**.

Blue Startups was founded to help **diversify Hawai'i's economy** by building a stronger technology sector. For more than a decade, we have supported entrepreneurs with mentorship, product validation, investor introductions, and access to early capital. Our work has shown us firsthand how critical **state investment** in innovation infrastructure is to attracting federal funding, retaining talent, and creating **high-wage jobs** in Hawai'i.

HB2545 establishes a **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Matching Program** within HTDC, providing state matching grants at fifty percent of federal SBIR/STTR awards to Hawai'i-based companies. It also creates a **STEM Education Outreach Program** in collaboration with the Department of Education and requires HTDC to develop an **Economic Diversification Strategic Plan** for the State. Requiring funded companies to present in public schools connects students, especially in underserved communities, to real-world innovation happening right here in Hawai'i.

The bill's **STEM Education Outreach Program** is equally important and builds the pipeline of local talent our technology sector needs to grow. The **Economic Diversification Strategic Plan** will provide the clear goals, measurable outcomes, and coordinated actions necessary to strengthen emerging industries and **high-wage job** sectors across all counties.

HB2545 supports outcomes that matter statewide. It strengthens **economic diversification**. It leverages federal dollars through a proven **SBIR matching model**. It expands pathways to **higher-wage jobs** in fields like AI, biotechnology, ocean science, renewable energy, aerospace, and defense. It helps attract and retain **talent and investment** by demonstrating a clear statewide commitment to innovation and technology-driven growth.

HB2545 is a practical step toward stronger innovation infrastructure and stronger results for Hawaii's **technology economy**. We respectfully urge the Committee to **pass HB2545** with a recommendation of support and advance it through the remaining referrals.

Mahalo,

Chenoa Farnsworth
Managing Director
Blue Startups





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

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

In consideration of
HB 2545 D1
RELATING TO THE HAWAI'I TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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

Namaka Algae, Inc. strongly **SUPPORTS** HB2545 D1, that supports the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Matching Program to empower local technology companies to leverage federal research funding, accelerating commercialization and job creation in high-growth sectors such as renewable energy, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing. This approach is consistent with best practices in technology-based economic development, where targeted matching programs have been shown to increase the competitiveness of small businesses and stimulate private investment. The bill's provisions directly support HTDC's core objectives by strengthening the innovation pipeline and developing a robust economic diversification strategy.

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

Valerie Harmon



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 **HB2545**:
“Relating to the Hawaii 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 **support of HB2545**.

Blue Startups was founded to help **diversify Hawai'i's economy** by building a stronger technology sector. For more than a decade, we have supported entrepreneurs with mentorship, product validation, investor introductions, and access to early capital. Our work has shown us firsthand how critical **state investment** in innovation infrastructure is to attracting federal funding, retaining talent, and creating **high-wage jobs** in Hawai'i.

HB2545 establishes a **Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Matching Program** within HTDC, providing state matching grants at fifty percent of federal SBIR/STTR awards to Hawai'i-based companies. It also creates a **STEM Education Outreach Program** in collaboration with the Department of Education and requires HTDC to develop an **Economic Diversification Strategic Plan** for the State. Requiring funded companies to present in public schools connects students, especially in underserved communities, to real-world innovation happening right here in Hawai'i.

The bill's **STEM Education Outreach Program** is equally important and builds the pipeline of local talent our technology sector needs to grow. The **Economic Diversification Strategic Plan** will provide the clear goals, measurable outcomes, and coordinated actions necessary to strengthen emerging industries and **high-wage job** sectors across all counties.

HB2545 supports outcomes that matter statewide. It strengthens **economic diversification**. It leverages federal dollars through a proven **SBIR matching model**. It expands pathways to **higher-wage jobs** in fields like AI, biotechnology, ocean science, renewable energy, aerospace, and defense. It helps attract and retain **talent and investment** by demonstrating a clear statewide commitment to innovation and technology-driven growth.

HB2545 is a practical step toward stronger innovation infrastructure and stronger results for Hawaii's **technology economy**. We respectfully urge the Committee to **pass HB2545** with a recommendation of support and advance it through the remaining referrals.

Mahalo,

David Holt
Program Director
Blue Startups





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
HB 2545 HD1
RELATING TO HAWAI'I TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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

Black Sand Solutions LLC SUPPORTS HB2545 HD1 that supports the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Matching Program to empower local technology companies to leverage federal research funding, accelerating commercialization and job creation in high-growth sectors such as renewable energy, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing. This approach is consistent with best practices in technology-based economic development, where targeted matching programs have been shown to increase the competitiveness of small businesses and stimulate private investment. The bill's provisions directly support HTDC's core objectives by strengthening the innovation pipeline and developing a robust economic diversification strategy.

Black Sand Solutions LLC is a small technology business that develops AI enabled software systems for space, defense, research and communications. We actively pursue and support SBIR/STTR efforts with University of Hawaii at Manoa and Hilo, and industry partners to move innovations from concept to deployable capability.

HTDC's SBIR Matching Program is valuable because it helps Hawai'i companies turn federal R&D awards into commercial outcomes and jobs. Matching funds can bridge the gap between a research prototype and a product ready capability, supporting local hiring, user evaluations, hardening, documentation, security engineering, and other transition activities that are often underfunded but essential for Phase II/Phase III success.

HB2545 HD1 strengthens this program and improves Hawai'i's competitiveness for federal dollars. For companies like ours, a reliable match expands the set of viable proposals and accelerates the pace at which federally funded research becomes real, deployable solutions growing the local ecosystem and fostering more Hawaii based employment of highly skilled and technical roles.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

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

HB 2545 HD1

RELATING TO HAWAI'I TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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

NeuroMuse LLC SUPPORTS HB2545 HD1 that supports the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Matching Program to empower local technology companies to leverage federal research funding, accelerating commercialization and job creation in high-growth sectors such as renewable energy, biotechnology, and advanced manufacturing. This approach is consistent with best practices in technology-based economic development, where targeted matching programs have been shown to increase the competitiveness of small businesses and stimulate private investment. The bill's provisions directly support HTDC's core objectives by strengthening the innovation pipeline and developing a robust economic diversification strategy.

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 HB2545 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 HB2545 HD1 and respectfully urges the Committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO 2545 HD1, RELATING TO
THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Position: **Strong 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 establish a permanent annual appropriation for Hawaii's SBIR matching program.

Simonpietri Enterprises LLC is an O'ahu-based small business that is working to develop solutions for wastes generated in Hawai'i. We have received several federal SBIR awards over the past 5 years which have allowed us to expand our team and continue progressing our work to develop sustainable solutions for Hawai'i's challenging wastes.

We are committed to the STEM education outreach requirement and have been partnered with the University of Hawai'i Schools (College of Engineer, College of Tropical Agriculture & Human Resiliency, Shidler School of Business, and West O'ahu) to offer paid STEM and field adjacent internships, paying higher than average wages to interns with a focus recruiting local undergraduate students. Hawai'i's innovation economy needs a pipeline of local talent, and connecting students with successful technology companies helps build that pipeline.

Our company has directly benefited from Hawaii's current SBIR matching program, and we can attest to its impact. The state matching funds we received allowed us to support workforce development efforts through paid internships, five of whom are University of Hawaii undergraduate interns, three of whom are now full-time employees on our team and are earning over \$80,000 annually. We also applied for and received our first-ever patent and now are now working on four international patents.

The bill's streamlined administration is critical. Having already undergone the federal government's rigorous technical and business review, a duplicative state process adds delay without value. The proposed approach—accepting the federal award as evidence of merit, is both efficient and appropriate.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on this measure, and urge your support for HB2546.

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.



TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE
RE: HB2545 RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION

COMMITTEE: House Committee on Economic Development.

HEARING DATE: Monday, March 2, 2026.

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

POSITION: STRONG SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

I am the founder and CEO at Nalu Scientific, a Hawaii-based microelectronics design and development company that has received over 10 federal SBIR federal SBIR awards totaling over \$10M in the past 10 years since inception. We strongly support this measure to establish a permanent annual appropriation for Hawaii's SBIR matching program. Our company has directly benefited from Hawaii's current SBIR matching program, and we can attest to its impact. The state matching funds we received allowed us to hire additional staff, accelerate development timeline, bridge funding gaps and take on advanced R&D with high returns on investments. Today, we employ 16 people in Hawaii, and all of them earn over \$80,000 annually.

The bill's streamlined administration is critical. Having already undergone the federal government's rigorous technical and business review, a duplicative state process adds delay, and wastes critical resources without adding value. The proposed approach—accepting the federal award as evidence of merit, is both efficient and appropriate.

We are committed to the STEM education outreach requirement. We have been working with faculty and students at both UH and HPU for early onboarding of their graduates. Most of our staff have started as interns at Nalu and have risen the ranks to be senior engineers over the years. Hawaii's innovation economy needs a pipeline of local talent, and connecting students with successful technology companies helps build that pipeline.

Federal SBIR funding has been transformative for our company. State matching funds multiply that impact and demonstrate that Hawaii values and supports its innovation sector. We have Received 3 US and one European patent for our underlying microelectronics technology that has laid the foundation on our commercialization journey. This has also allowed us to be sole sources selected for several national lab funded awards (federal) for subsequent developments. Our work has put Hawaii on the map of high tech microelectronics development with new microelectronics funding activity slated for the forthcoming years through the CHIPS act. We need to be ready at the table when time comes and matching grants help us bridge to success. This bill will enable more Hawaii companies to achieve similar success. We urge the committee to pass this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted, Isar Mostafanezhad, Founder and CEO at Nalu Scientific

Statement of
Doreen Wong
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
HB2545 HD1 RELATING TO HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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

I, Doreen Wong, a technology and innovation advisor and economic development professional, urge you to **SUPPORT HB2545 HD1**, which strengthens the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation's (HTDC) role in economic diversification through technology and innovation. HB2545 HD1 is designed to help Hawai'i bring in more federal R&D dollars and convert them into outcomes—products, services, and more higher-paying jobs. By supporting commercialization, technology transition, and manufacturing, HB2545 HD1 helps ensure innovations don't stall at the research stage, but continue toward deployment and production to deliver longer-term economic value to Hawai'i. The measure's STEM outreach component also helps connect locally-funded innovation to our state's students and future workforce.

For example, in 2024, 27 Hawai'i companies that received \$2.5 million in state funds leveraged approximately \$33 million in federal awards. As raised in UHERO's recent report on Hawai'i's economy, [*Beyond the Price of Paradise: Is Hawai'i Being Left Behind?*](#), we need meaningful productivity and innovation to further strengthen the state's long-term economic resilience.

I bring 14 years of experience working at the intersection of technology innovation, policy, and finance across global, regional, and local levels. I have made investments in over 30 technology companies, have collaborated with HTDC and the University of Hawai'i to strengthen the state's technology and innovation ecosystem. This is one of the key steps for the state that can help promising companies stay and grow in Hawai'i by providing matched funding, spurring partnerships with federal, industry, and local stakeholders, building capacity, and contributing to a more resilient economy.

I urge you to support HB2545 HD1. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

Sincerely,



Doreen Wong
Technology and Innovation Advisor & Economic Development Professional

To: Representative Chris Todd, Chair
Representative Jenna Takenouchi, Vice Chair
Committee on Finance

From: Veronica Moore, Individual Citizen

Date: March 1, 2026

RE: House Bill 2545 HD1
Measure Title: RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION.
Report Title: HTDC; Small Business Innovation Research Matching Program;
STEM Education Outreach Program; Economic Diversification Strategic Plan;
Appropriations (\$)

To All Concerned,

My name is Veronica Moore and I support House Bill 2545 HD1. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Veronica M. Moore

HB-2545-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/28/2026 4:34:57 PM

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

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Kosak	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This testimony is in support of HB2545 relating to HTDC, the SBIR Matching Program, and the STEM education outreach program.

For over ten years, I ran the not-for-profit Hawaii Tech Exchange in Hilo, Hawaii, supporting our local entrepreneurial STEM community. I've seen firsthand how beneficial the SBIR matching program was to invigorate new local business ventures and create new local jobs.

I hope that you will vote 'yes' to support these necessary programs for Hawaii's economic development.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this matter.

Sincerely,

Julia Kosak
Hilo, Hawaii