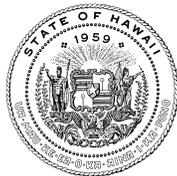**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**
GOVERNOR
KE KIAʻĀINA

KEITH A. REGAN
COMPTROLLER
KA LUNA HOʻOMALU HANA LAULĀ

CHRISTINE M. SAKUDA
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
LUNA ʻENEHANA

STATE OF HAWAIʻI | *KA MOKUʻĀINA O HAWAIʻI*
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | *KA ʻOIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWE LAULĀ*

OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES | *KEʻENA HOʻOLANA ʻENEHANA*
P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

Testimony of
CHRISTINE M. SAKUDA
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES
TO THE

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY AND HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS
Friday, February 6, 2026

HOUSE BILL NO. 2597
RELATING TO ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on H.B. 2597.

The Office of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) **supports** this bill which requires the Chief Data Officer to enhance the State's open data portal website through the phased development and publishing of an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot as a virtual assistant on statewide shared data sets to assist the public in navigating the open data portal website and finding information about statewide services across state departments and agencies.

This measure requires the Chief Data Officer to develop a system to evaluate and select AI governance tools for use by state departments and agencies and establish a mechanism for reporting and publication of AI use cases and AI vendors used by the departments and agencies.

Because technology tools are often quickly outdated, we recommend changing the term "Chatbot" to a more generic "virtual assistant" in the bill.

The bill appropriates $2,000,000 to develop the tool and hire an AI engineer and an AI scientist to support this project. ETS is currently in the process of determining the full scope and projected costs of the technology and resources needed to support this effort.

ETS advances the business of government through secure, efficient technology solutions. We enable executive departments and state agencies to share data seamlessly, fostering collaboration and improving public service delivery. We provide strategic guidance and technical expertise to ensure initiatives strengthen operations and create a more connected, responsive government.

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

OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

To: House Committee on Economic Development & Technology

From: Carlotta Amerino, Director

Date: February 6, 2026, 8:30 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

Re: Testimony on S.B. No. 2597
Relating to Artificial Intelligence

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, which would require the Chief Data Officer (CDO) to make the State's open data portal a comprehensive Hawaii data hub and to create an artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot based on it, to assist the public in navigating the data hub and finding information about statewide services. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) supports the intent of this bill to aid the public in accessing government data and learning about government services, but recommends an amendment to clarify the bill's apparent requirement that all agencies use a chatbot.

Proposed section 27-__(b), at page 2 lines 4-7, states that all state agencies "shall utilize the artificial intelligence chatbot or link their departmental chatbot to the comprehensive Hawaii data hub" to ensure consistent results "across state websites." The apparent intent of this provision is to, as it states, ensure consistent results no matter which state website's chatbot a person engages with. However, as written, the provision does not give an agency the option of not offering a chatbot on its website: all state agencies must either use the chatbot developed by the CDO directly or link their departmental chatbot to the data hub.

In proposed subsection 27-__(c) this bill also provides, appropriately, that the chatbot is "prohibited from providing any legal advice or medical advice to a user," presumably to avoid the potential for the chatbot to engage in the unauthorized practice of law or of medicine. Thus, the bill recognizes that there are areas where it would be inappropriate to deploy a chatbot to respond to public inquiries. The problem is that as written, the bill would nonetheless require state agencies to either use either the chatbot developed by the CDO or use another chatbot drawing from the same data, regardless of whether use of a chatbot is consistent with the agency's mission. For a state office such as OIP whose staff is comprised primarily of attorneys, and which is charged with advising agencies, boards, and the public about the requirements of the laws it administers and providing legal opinions based on those laws, most inquiries from the public entail giving legal advice within a narrow area of law (although OIP does not have clients and acts as a neutral). Just as it would be inappropriate for OIP's non-attorney staff to provide legal advice, it would be inappropriate for a chatbot to do so, but if OIP was required to offer a chatbot under this bill, most of the questions it received would be legal ones.

OIP therefore respectfully recommends that this Committee amend this measure to clarify that it does not require all agencies to use a chatbot, but only requires those agencies that do use a chatbot to either use the one developed by the CDO or one drawing from the same data. To accomplish this, OIP recommends that the sentence starting at bill page 2, line 4, be amended to read as follows:

> State departments and agencies that deploy a chatbot shall utilize the artificial intelligence chatbot or link their departmental chatbot to the comprehensive Hawaii data hub to ensure chatbot results are consistent across State websites.

Thank you for considering OIP's testimony.

HB-2597
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 12:38:05 PM
Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Genaro Hale Gualdarama	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

in support of bill 2597.

HB-2597
Submitted on: 2/4/2026 8:18:56 PM
Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gabriela Schneider	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Committee Members,

I support HB2597's responsible approach to creating a state open data portal chatbot. Hawaii's legislative website demonstrates the state's commitment to keeping pace with emerging technology to make its work more accessible to the public. Responsibly adopting AI is a great step forward and is commendable.

Why this matters:

- **Accessibility**: AI-powered chat interfaces can democratize access to government data, helping residents navigate complex datasets without technical expertise
- **Efficiency**: A well-designed chatbot reduces barriers to civic engagement and public information
- **Responsible innovation**: Hawaii can lead by implementing AI tools with appropriate safeguards from the start

Key principles for success:

- Transparency about the chatbot's capabilities and limitations
- Clear data governance and privacy protections
- Regular accuracy audits and human oversight
- Accessibility for all residents

This bill aligns with best practices from legislative modernization efforts nationwide. When implemented responsibly, AI tools can strengthen democratic engagement while maintaining public trust.

I respectfully urge passage of HB2597.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Gabriela Schneider, North Kohala (Big Island)

HB-2597
Submitted on: 2/5/2026 5:48:21 PM
Testimony for ECD on 2/6/2026 8:30:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Hailey	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill (and all AI investment bills) because:

1. polls have shown that most people don't enjoy or use ai integration in their tech. why waste tax dollars on something citizens don't want.

2. research (https://www.gartner.com/en/newsroom/press-releases/2026-1-15-gartner-says-worldwide-ai-spending-will-total-2-point-5-trillion-dollars-in-2026 Potrykus 2024, Floridi 2024) suggests that the AI boom is a bubble. Why on earth would we want to invest government money into an economic bubble that we know is going to pop?

3. AI is incredibly taxing on the environment, and takes huge amounts of water to run.

4. I grew up in the silicon valley. The AI boom is the latest in a long line of tech fads that I saw growing up, one where tech guys would insist that this new project was going to be the GREATEST THING EVER if you only gave them a few million dollars to make it happen. Before AI, the fad was NFTs. Before that, it was cryptocurrency. None of it is actually useful or worth anything. This is another fad. We don't need to invest tax payer money in an ai chatbot for the state.

5. an ai chatbot assistant is just the new version of Microsoft Word's "Clippy" from the 1990s. Did you enjoy Clippy? Was it useful? No.