



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

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

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT DIVISION

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Statement of
Dennis T. Ling
Administrator

Business Development and Support Division
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON
WAYS AND MEANS**

Wednesday, February 25, 2026
10:57 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
SB2354, SD1
RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Committee. The Business Development and Support Division (BDSD) of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports **SB2354, SD1** and offers the following comments on this bill the requires the Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to make certain contact information for newly registered entities available online. This bill also requires the department director to transmit certain specified contact information to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) Business Development and Support Division.

BDSD agrees that this measure may assist in the promotion and increased public awareness of services that it offers Hawaii's businesses, including technical assistance, finance opportunities, and training. DBEDT notes that there is an ongoing initiative currently in place to accomplish these goals.

In partnership with the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA), Business Registration Division (BREG), DBEDT has been able to share its services

relating to technical assistance, financing opportunities and economic information, with Hawaii businesses who register online with Hawaii Business Express since July of 2024. When a new business registers or an existing business renews files its report online, the registrant receives a confirmation email from DCCA. This email includes language directing recipients to a dedicated DBEDT landing page (<https://invest.hawaii.gov/dcca/>) that highlights business support programs and services offer by DBEDT's Divisions and attached agencies. This link is also accessible on DCCA's Business Action Center webpage in the "Training Opportunities and Resources" and "Starting a Business" sections. This initiative allows businesses to effectively "opt-in", guides interested parties to the relevant program or service and assists DBEDT in managing inquiries.

While BDSB does not receive contact information up-front, for those who sign up on the DBEDT landing page to receive DBEDT information and our newsletter, DBEDT will then follow up and place on our mailing list.

BDSB emphasizes that information security, privacy interests, and minimizing the risk of data exposure and unwanted solicitation should be considered along with small business support efforts.

BDSB defers to the State Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs for matters related to legal authority, operational implementation and overall feasibility associated with this measure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



TESTIMONY OF DAVE ERDMAN, PRESIDENT & CEO
RETAIL MERCHANTS OF HAWAII
FEBRUARY 17, 2026

**IN SUPPORT OF SB 2354 SD1 – RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND
CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

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

My name is Dave Erdman, and I serve as Interim President and CEO of Retail Merchants of Hawai'i (RMH), a statewide nonprofit trade association representing retailers, shopping centers, restaurants, and allied businesses across the State.

Retail Merchants of Hawai'i supports SB 2354 SD1.

This measure takes a practical step to improve communication between state agencies and newly registered businesses. Under the bill, the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs would make publicly available basic contact information already collected at registration and, unless a business affirmatively opts out, transmit that information to the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism's Business Development and Support Division.

Hawai'i has over 200,000 registered businesses, yet state agencies responsible for economic development have historically had limited ability to directly reach them. That gap affects small businesses. Many retailers are unaware of available grants, workforce programs, technical assistance, disaster guidance, and other economic support resources simply because the State does not have a reliable communication channel.

SB 2354 SD1 establishes a reasonable and balanced framework:

- It uses information businesses already provide at registration.
- It includes an affirmative opt-out for those who prefer not to participate.
- It limits transmission to legitimate governmental economic-development purposes.

From the retail community's perspective, improved communication strengthens economic resilience, supports small business growth, and helps ensure that neighbor-island and locally owned enterprises are not left out of state programs.

This is a modernization measure that aligns state business registration with economic-development outreach in a transparent and structured way.

Retail Merchants of Hawai'i respectfully urges your support of SB 2354 SD1. Mahalo, for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,
Dave Erdman Interim President & CEO Retail Merchants of Hawai'i

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, February 25, 2026, at 10:57AM
Conference Room CR 211 & Videoconference**

RE: SB2354 SD1 Relating to the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports Senate Bill 2354 SD1 (SB2354 SD1), which requires the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to make certain contact information for newly registered entities available online and transmit the contact information to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) Business Development and Support Division.

SB2354 SD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Small Business. For the state to maximize the value of its investments in small business development and programming through DBEDT, the department must be able to engage in communication with these new small businesses. With information on new business registration existing within the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, DBEDT is deprived of the ability to recognize these new businesses and reach out. Each one of these businesses exist as an opportunity to deploy state funded support.

Our members recognize and appreciate the diverse small business resources that exist, within and outside of DBEDT, although dedicating time to researching and differentiating between these resources can be challenging, confusing, and time intensive. Time that a business owner might rather use tending to their operations. If newly registered businesses were identifiable and contactable by DBEDT on an opt-in basis, significant relief can be brought to the small business resource diligence process. With this information, DBEDT can be prescriptive with its resources, rather than rely on small businesses to conduct diligence and initiate outreach. Implementing SB 2354 SD1 would allow DBEDT to magnify its impact and increase access to its support resources, resources that a new business may have never pursued otherwise.

It is for these reasons the Chamber supports SB2354 SD1 and respectfully request its passage. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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.



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Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Advisor*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Ways and Means
FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 25, 2026
TIME: 10:57am

RE: SB2354 SD1 Relating to the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs
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 has proudly produced the Made in Hawaii Festival for over 30 years. One of the things that makes the Made in Hawaii Festival so unique and important to our state is that it serves as a small business incubator. In recent years we have worked with the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) and the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) as Sponsors of the Festival. The support and partnership from HTDC and DBEDT has enabled the hundreds of local businesses that are part of the Made in Hawaii Festival to connect with the vital resources available through these agencies. We have seen the benefits of these connections. Many Made in Hawaii Festival have utilized programs available through HTDC and DBEDT to grow and thrive.

We believe that this measure will help make the valuable resources and opportunities available through DBEDT available to even more local businesses. Supporting local businesses with State resources makes our economy more diverse and stronger for us all. We encourage the Committee to pass this measure, and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-2354-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 11:54:10 AM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:57:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
R. A.	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

I am writing to you today as a small business owner in our community to express my concerns regarding SB 2354 SD1. While I understand the goals of this measure, I am deeply concerned about the potential exposure of my personal contact information, specifically my personal phone number and email address, within public records.

As a small business owner, I operate without a massive corporate infrastructure. My personal phone is my business phone. However, making this information a matter of public record creates significant risks, including:

- **Privacy and Safety:** Increased vulnerability to identity theft and harassment.
- **Operational Disruptions:** An influx of unsolicited marketing calls and spam that hinders my ability to serve actual customers.

I strongly urge the committee to adopt the privacy "opt-out" language currently found in HB 2349 HD1.

This amendment would allow small business owners to shield their personal contact information from public disclosure. This is a common-sense solution that balances the need for government transparency with the fundamental right to privacy for individual entrepreneurs.

The "opt-out" provision in HB 2349 HD1 provides a much-needed safeguard that allows us to focus on growing our businesses without compromising our personal security. Please ensure that small business owners are afforded the same privacy protections intended by the House version of this legislation.

Thank you for your time and for your support of the small business community.

SB-2354-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 12:42:06 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:57:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex Kagawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Many small businesses (e.g 1-3 people) do not have dedicated contact information that can safely be provided for public consumption. Many of these owners use social media DMs to communication with their clients for the very reason of keeping their personal contact information private. Bot calls, spam emails, and other unsolicited ads may inundate their limited email message quotas, interfere with business calls, and clutter mailboxes with unwanted material. We are already dealing with enough challenges just to stay above water, please don't add on more issues for the small business owners who do not wish to participate in any government assistance programs (e.g. DBEDT). Have an opt-out added at th BREG level so that those who do not want to participate do not have to provide such information.

Thank you for your consideration.

SB-2354-SD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2026 10:31:00 PM

Testimony for WAM on 2/25/2026 10:57:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tina Cheng	Testifying for Trained By Tina LLC	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair and Committee Members,

Thank you for your time. I am writing to express my concerns regarding SB 2354 SD1. I am a very small business owner in our community focusing on Health and Wellness in the fitness industry. I am seriously concerned about the exposure of my personal contact information, specifically my personal phone number and email address, within public records.

As a small business owner, I don't have a large team or any separate corporate infrastructure. My personal phone is the number my customers call. Requiring my contact information to be publicly accessible exposes me to potentially dangerous risks.

- Loss of privacy and personal safety including identity theft and harassment, moreover potentially sexual harassment as I am a female.
- Overwhelming spam and unsolicited marketing calls interfere with serving my customers.

I strongly support the privacy "opt-out" language currently found in HB 2349 HD1. This gives small business owners a reasonable way to protect our personal contract information without undermining transparency.

The opt-out provision is a practical, balanced solution that allows us to continue growing our businesses without sacrificing our personal security. I respectfully ask that these protections be preserved in the final legislation.

Thank you for your time and for standing with Hawaii's small businesses.

Tina Cheng



Testimony to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services
Wednesday February 25; 10:57 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211
Via Videoconference

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 3254, RELATING TO THE STATE BUDGET

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee

Molokai Ohana Health Care, Inc., dba the Molokai Community Health Center (MCHC), **SUPPORTS Senate Bill No. 3254.** As the only Federally Qualified Health Center on the island of Molokai. MCHC serves an island population of about 6,980 residents, of which 45% are individuals and families whose incomes are below 200% of the federal poverty guidance. For over 20 years, MCHC has served as a vital access point and classic safety net for affordable primary medical, dental, and behavioral health care for the uninsured and underinsured populations of Molokai.

This bill would appropriate funding to invest in an infrastructure upgrade – but also provide a strategic commitment to healthcare access, workforce development, fiscal responsibility and community resilience for the island of Molokai.

If approved, this investment will save Molokai Community Health Center up to \$87,000 annually in electricity costs; over \$2.1 million in energy costs over a 25-year span. As a safety net provider, Molokai Community Health Center operates on thin margins while serving the island's vulnerable patients who rely on Medicaid, Medicare and sliding fee services. Rising utility costs directly impact our ability to invest in patient care, workforce recruitment, and expanded services. Solar installation will generate significant long-term cost savings by reducing monthly electricity expenses and stabilize energy costs for decades. The savings can be reinvested into direct patient services, strengthening the health center's financial sustainability, as well as the health care infrastructure on the island of Molokai.

Equally important is continuity of care. As a healthcare provider, MCHC must remain open during emergencies, natural disasters, and grid disruptions. Investment in this project, especially with the addition of battery backup, enhances energy resilience and ensures uninterrupted access to critical services on Molokai, where alternative care services are limited.

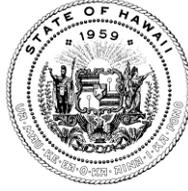
I respectfully urge your strong support for this critical project.

Milton Cortez, CEO
Molokai Community Health Center

Mission: To provide and promote accessible comprehensive individual and community health care to the people of Molokai with respect and aloha.

Visit us at <http://molokaichc.org/>

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DEAN I HAZAMA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

**Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Wednesday, February 25, 2026
10:57 a.m.
Via Videoconference**

**On the following measure:
S.B. 2354 S.D. 1, RELATING TO THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND
CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Committee:

My name is Ty Nohara, and I am the Commissioner of Securities and head of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' (Department) Business Registration Division (BREG). The Department offers comments on this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to require the Department to (1) make available online certain contact information of newly registered corporations, professional corporations, and limited liability companies, and (2) transmit this contact information to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism - Business Development and Support Division (DBEDT). Thus, this bill seeks to amend chapters 414 and 428 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS) to add new sections¹ that require

¹ Additionally, this bill seeks to amend HRS § 415A-14.7 to provide that the required filings for a professional corporation will also be governed by the new section to be added to HRS chapter 414.

such newly registered entities to provide the following information that will be available online and accessible to the public, as part of BREG's database of public information:

- Name and contact information, including phone number;
- Electronic mail address; and
- Mailing address.

This bill also requires the Department to transmit the above information to DBEDT, unless the newly registered entity affirmatively opts out of the transmission of its information.

BREG appreciates the intent of this bill to promote and to increase public awareness of DBEDT's services to businesses, by creating another avenue for DBEDT to expand its outreach efforts. BREG offers the following comments.

1. The HRS sets forth the specific information that each type of business entity is required to provide when it registers with BREG. Currently, every entity must provide its principal address and mailing address, its agent's name, and the agent's mailing address. That information is already publicly available on BREG's online database, through a portal known as "Hawaii Business Express."²
2. Since July 2024, DBEDT and BREG have been working in partnership to assist newly registered entities to learn about, and to access, the programs that DBEDT offers to businesses. This collaboration arose out of DBEDT's request to include information about DBEDT in the confirming email that BREG sends a new entity after it has registered with BREG. The confirming email includes a message from DBEDT that (a) informs the entity that DBEDT provides technical assistance, financing opportunities, and economic information to support businesses, and (b) invites the entity to learn more and to participate in DBEDT's business development and support programs. Entities that are interested in these programs and services may then connect

² Hawaii Business Express is a search portal that provides online users (1) the ability to search for an entity by name to determine whether the entity exists, and (2) basic information regarding that entity.

with DBEDT via a provided link to a DBEDT-designed web page.³ The DBEDT link is also included in the Department’s Business Action Center home page, under its “Training Opportunities and Resources” page⁴ and its “Starting a Business” page.⁵

3. Some entities may not wish, for various reasons, to have their telephone numbers and/or electronic mail addresses made publicly available online. Under this bill, not only may newly registered entities receive contact from DBEDT by telephone and electronic mail, but they will also be subject to robocalls, spam communications, phishing and scam attempts, and other unsolicited, and potentially abusive, contact from other parties unrelated to DBEDT. Consequently, the Department cannot ensure that such contact information, once made public and “available online,” will only be used in a manner consistent with the conditions or reasonable expectations of use and disclosure under which the entity provided the information to BREG.
4. The Department may violate personal privacy interests by making “available online” certain contact information that would otherwise be protected from disclosure to the public under HRS chapter 92H (chapter 92H). Chapter 92H, entitled “Restrictions on publication of certain public servants’ personal information,” recognizes that certain personal information, such as telephone numbers and personal electronic mail addresses, of “covered public servants” should be protected from disclosure.⁶ Under this bill, the telephone numbers and electronic mail addresses of newly registered entities, whether such

³ DBEDT’s message and its link are also provided in BREG’s confirming email to existing entities after certain filings submitted to BREG have been completed and/or approved.

⁴ In February 2026, the DCCA streamlined and redesigned its website, and the Business Action Center’s (BAC) home page is currently being updated. A new URL for the BAC’s “Training Opportunities and Resources” page (previously at <https://cca.hawaii.gov/bac/training-opportunities-from-other-organizations/>) will be provided once it is available.

⁵ See footnote 4 above. A new URL for the BAC’s “Starting a Business” page (previously at <https://cca.hawaii.gov/bac/steps-to-starting-a-business/research-the-market/>) will be provided once it is available.

⁶ “Covered public servants” include members of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, such as department heads, legislators, judges, and various administrators. See HRS § 92H-1.

entities are formed by covered public servants or members of the general public, will be made available online, with no option to request that such information not be publicly disclosed. A newly registered entity can only request that its information not be transmitted to DBEDT, but it must affirmatively “opt out” of such transmission. BREG notes that the companion to this bill, House Bill 2349, H.D.1, provides a better option by allowing newly registered entities to opt-in in order for their contact information and electronic mail addresses to be made available online to the public.

5. In addition to amending the HRS, this bill will require the adoption of new rules and revision of the forms that a new entity must file to be registered in the State’s business registry. Further, the myriad documents and transactions that BREG processes are supported by a highly complex “back end” management and documents processing system. The collection and transmission of the additional data contemplated by this bill, and the required revisions to BREG’s forms, will necessitate system adjustments. Therefore, BREG respectfully requests a ceiling increase of \$75,000.00 to contract for the services required to perform such work.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.