



Statement of
Valerie Harmon
Founder and CEO
Namaka Algae, Inc.
before the

- **Committee on Ways and Means:** Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Moriwaki and esteemed members of the Committee on Ways and Means

By Friday March 6, 2026
State Capitol, Conference Room 224 and Videoconference

In consideration of
SB2907

Nāmaka Algae, Inc. strongly **SUPPORTS** SB2907, which formally recognizes the State of Hawai'i as an ocean cluster and establishes the Office of Marine Affairs and a Marine Affairs Task Force under the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC). This bill is a critical step to strengthen Hawai'i's leadership in the blue economy and grow economic opportunities across the Pacific Islands.

Hawai'i's Blue Economy contributes over \$10 billion to our GDP and supports 100,000 jobs, with marine business activity growing 23% in the past decade. As the U.S. largest island state in the Pacific and ocean steward in the second largest Exclusive Economic Zone, Hawai'i is not only uniquely positioned to innovate but to attract federal, philanthropic, and private investments to sustain the local blue economy and address critical marine issues.

SB2907 provides dedicated leadership, strategic coordination across the public and private sectors, and annual reporting for Hawai'i blue economy activities, ensuring that economic development, technology advancement, and cultural stewardship remain priorities. The bill will help attract new funding opportunities, create future-ready jobs, and support collaboration across public-private sectors.

Nāmaka Algae, Inc. is a technology first company focused on low-cost algae biomass for fish superfoods. We produce in Hawai'i for Hawai'i 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 Nāmaka 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.



In summary, SB2907 is a timely and necessary measure to catalyze Hawaii's leadership in ocean technology and innovation while realizing the vision of a resilient economic future for our islands.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Aloha,

Valerie Harmon



NATURAL ENERGY LABORATORY OF HAWAII AUTHORITY



An Authority of the State of Hawaii attached to the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism

Statement of
Laurence Sombardier, Deputy Director
For Riley M. Saito, Executive Director
Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority
before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Wednesday, March 4, 2026
10:31 am
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

in consideration of

SB 2907, SD1
RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS.

The Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawai'i Authority (NELHA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on SB2907, SD1, which recognizes the State of Hawai'i as an ocean cluster, establishes the Office of Marine Affairs and a dedicated staff position, and transfers the personnel and functions of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Marine Affairs to the new office.

NELHA is a self-sufficient state agency supporting more than 55 companies and generating an estimated annual economic impact of \$148 million for Hawai'i, according to the University of Hawai'i Economic Research Organization's analysis for calendar year 2022. Our mission includes advancing ocean research, innovation, and technology development at the 870-acre Hawai'i Ocean Science and Technology (HOST) Park on Hawai'i Island.

A robust and environmentally responsible blue economy is essential to strengthening Hawai'i's economic resilience, protecting natural resources, addressing climate-related challenges, and creating high-quality local jobs. Hawai'i already possesses many of the foundational assets needed to lead globally in this sector, including:

- A strategic location in the Pacific
- World-class infrastructure such as HOST Park
- Exceptional marine biodiversity
- Indigenous knowledge systems, including sustainable loko i'a practices
- Leading research institutions in ocean and climate sciences
- Established and successful ocean-focused businesses
- Strong public support for marine stewardship

Centralized leadership through an Office of Marine Affairs would help coordinate efforts across agencies and stakeholders, leverage existing strengths, and develop a cohesive statewide strategy. A dedicated office can also ensure that data, research, and community input are translated into actionable policy that advances Hawai'i's blue economy in a sustainable and culturally grounded manner.

We also note that other measures under consideration address related aspects of blue economy development. Aligning the efforts envisioned across these bills would help prevent duplication and strengthen their overall impact.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.



Blue Startups

55 Merchant Street, Suite 1700
Honolulu, HI 96813

To be presented to the WAM Committee on
Wednesday, March 4th at 10:31 AM

Regarding **SB 2907**:
“Relating to the Office of Marine Affairs from HTDC to the Governor’s Office”

Testimony in Support

Date: March 2, 2026

From: David Holt
Program Director, Blue Startups
david@bluestartups.com

WAM Committee:

Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki
Esteemed members of the Committee

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

My name is David Holt, and I am the Program Director at Blue Startups. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of SB 2907**.

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 building companies in Hawai‘i.

Blue Startups is launching an **Ocean Tech Program** this summer designed to position Hawai‘i as a **global testbed for ocean innovation** aligned with **HTDC’s Ocean Technology** priority.

Hawai‘i’s ocean and coastal strengths have the power to touch energy, food systems, transportation, climate resilience, research, and tourism.

We strongly support the Committee in passing **SB 2907** and advancing it through the remaining referrals.

A **Marine Affairs Coordinator** can help align strategy with execution. This includes identifying barriers, building partnerships, and pursuing public and federal resources that local companies

and researchers can use to test, deploy, and scale solutions in Hawai'i. The bill's focus on investment readiness and commercialization pathways is especially important for turning ideas into **jobs** and deployable projects.

SB 2907 supports outcomes that matter statewide. It strengthens **economic diversification**. It improves **resilience** through coastal and ocean-related innovation. It expands pathways to **higher wage jobs** in technology-enabled ocean sectors. It helps attract and retain **talent and investment** by presenting a clear statewide strategy and a coordinated entry point for engagement across all islands.

SB 2907 is a practical step toward stronger coordination and stronger results for Hawai'i's **blue economy**. We respectfully urge the Committee to **pass SB 2907** with a recommendation of support and advance it through the remaining referrals.

Mahalo,

David Holt
Program Director
Blue Startups



SB-2907-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/2/2026 5:04:15 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Pepper Shiramizu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

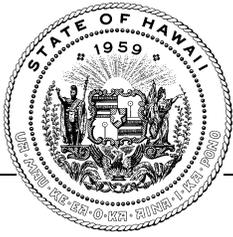
Comments:

I am Writing in support of SB2907. Please make sure this bill is heard for Ways and Means committee It is needed to create a position in the state to coordinate blue economic activity. We are the only ocean facing US state that does not have the designation of an ocean cluster, which hurts us when coordinating local industry to attract federal funding. Friends that I have grown up with routinely have to go to the continental US to seek support from ocean cluster organizations to support their Hawaii-based startups because Hawaii has failed to designate one at the state level.

These economic activities account for 18% of our states GDP and are expected to grow year over year. This bill is the important first step in creating a pipeline of high paying jobs for our local economy.

The bill wanting to create a position at the state level to connect state agencies, community organizations, and blue technology companies together to innovate for our future. If we do not begin to coordinate our local blue economy, we will continue to be left in the past.

Mahalo,



**STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF PLANNING
& SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

MARY ALICE EVANS
DIRECTOR

235 South Beretania Street, 6th Floor, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804

Telephone: (808) 587-2846
Fax: (808) 587-2824
Web: <https://planning.hawaii.gov/>

Statement of
MARY ALICE EVANS, Director

before the
SENATE COMMITTEES ON WAYS AND MEANS

Wednesday, March 4, 2026
10:31 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

in consideration of
SB2907, SD1
RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

The Office of Planning and Sustainable Development (OPSD) offers **comments** on SB2907, SD1, which declares the State as an ocean cluster and establishes the Office of Marine Affairs under the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation. Hawai'i's blue ocean economy has deep cultural roots and has historically represented an engine for economic prosperity into the present day.

OPSD finds that the Hawai'i State Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) identifies growing a "statewide blue ocean economy cluster" as an important objective for the State's economic prosperity. Hawai'i has already developed a substantial and expanding blue ocean economy with significant investments in aquaculture, shipbuilding, energy, recreation, marine research, and other areas. When combined with Hawai'i's location at the center of the Pacific Ocean and a rich cultural tradition of ocean stewardship and innovation, these pre-existing investments provide Hawai'i unique comparative advantages in the development of a blue ocean economy. Declaring the State an ocean cluster and establishing an Office of Marine Affairs serves to promote the implementation of CEDS and advance Hawai'i's blue ocean economy while preserving Hawai'i's natural and cultural ocean resources.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

Statement of
Doreen Wong
Ocean Technology and Innovation Advisor
before the
Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, March 4, 2026
10:31 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SB 2907 RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means,

I'm Doreen Wong, a sustainable blue economy and ocean technology and innovation professional. I strongly urge you to **SUPPORT SB 2907**, which recognizes Hawai'i as an ocean cluster and establishes a coordinated statewide structure—an Office of Marine Affairs, a Marine Affairs Task Force, and a dedicated coordinator position—to drive execution and build local capacity. This measure is timely investment in Hawai'i's long-term economic resilience, strengthening statewide coordination and capacity so Hawai'i can compete for investment, accelerate implementation, and deliver community benefits aligned with ocean stewardship.

I bring 14 years of experience working at the intersection of technology innovation, policy, and finance across global, regional, and local levels. I currently advise NOAA-funded Ocean Enterprise Accelerators, including UC San Diego's StartBlue and VentureWell, and have collaborated with HTDC and the University of Hawai'i to develop the local ocean technology and innovation ecosystem. As a Contributing Member of the 1000 Ocean Startups coalition, a global network of over 60 incubators, accelerators, venture capital firms, and other capital providers (several with ties to Hawai'i), I have seen firsthand the rapid growth of this sector over the years and the funding opportunities that Hawai'i has, at times, missed out on.

The blue economy is one of the fastest growing sectors, encompassing maritime, logistics and supply chain, coastal resiliency, marine conservation, energy, blue foods or aquatic foods, biotechnology, ocean data, and outdoor recreation. [Hawai'i's blue economy](#) is already contributing over \$10 billion to our state's GDP and supports 100,000 jobs, with marine business activity growing 23% in the past decade. As the largest U.S. island state in the second largest Exclusive Economic Zone, Hawai'i is uniquely positioned to support the Pacific Islands in attracting federal, philanthropic, and private investments to this region.

However, to maintain our competitive edge and realize our full potential, Hawai'i needs a more coordinated approach, one that aligns to statewide priorities, improves our investment readiness, and converts local innovation into deployable projects and quality

jobs. In practice, this means having consistent local capacity to coordinate across agencies and partners, navigating barriers that slow down our progress, and moving from our existing strategic planning efforts to execution.

Other U.S. coastal states and global regions, such as San Diego, Washington, Oregon, Alaska, Maine, New England, Florida, Norway, Iceland, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and more, have successfully leveraged ocean clusters to drive local economic growth, innovation, and workforce development. Hawai'i is currently the only U.S. Pacific state touching the Pacific Ocean without a designated ocean cluster, risking missed opportunities for leadership and funding.

Over the eight months, I've participated in coalition-building efforts with more than 80 organizations focused on strengthening Hawai'i's economic future through the sustainable blue economy and ocean technology and innovation. There is momentum **now**, and this is the moment to match it with the coordination capacity needed to deliver valuable outcomes for the Pacific Island region.

In UHERO's most recent economic report, [*Beyond the Price of Paradise: Is Hawai'i Being Left Behind?*](#), notes:

“Addressing the cost of living remains essential, but without meaningful improvements in productivity and real income growth, the same economic pressures driving outmigration today will persist and intensify over time. With thoughtful, locally-driven policy and a renewed commitment to long-term value creation, Hawai'i can move from being ‘left behind’ toward building a more dynamic and resilient future.”

By passing **SB 2907**, Hawai'i can lean into its natural strengths and serve as a global model for the Pacific Islands in the sustainable and regenerative blue economy. **SB 2907** is a timely and necessary measure to recognize Hawaii's leadership in the blue economy and realize its full potential as a leader in marine industries.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of **SB 2907**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doreen Wong". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Doreen" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Wong".

Doreen Wong
Ocean Technology and Innovation Advisor
Contributing Member, 1000 Ocean Startups

Dear Chairman Dela Cruz, Vice-chairwoman Moriwaki, and esteemed members of the committee, my name is Joshua Baghdady and my career is a testament to the power of the blue economy to connect people, ideas, and activities for the health and sustainability of our blue planet. I wish to testify in **strong support** of Senate Bill 2907 (SD1) to establish Hawai'i as an ocean cluster.

I was homeschooled in the coastal state of South Carolina and studied electrical engineering at Clemson University. In graduate school, I was fortunate enough to work on a project funded by the Office of Naval Research investigating the use of semiconductor lasers for underwater wireless communications. While presenting my work at a marine technology conference in California, I met a physical oceanographer and marine ecologist from the US Coast Guard who became my mentor in all things relating to the ocean. I was intrigued by this linkage of technology and marine stewardship and decided to pivot my career in this direction. My mentor introduced me to Margo Edwards, the director of the Applied Research Laboratory at UH, and I began my professional career here in Hawai'i in 2017. Over the past decade I have been involved on a myriad of marine-related projects, from ocean sensing with robots, buoys, and undersea cables to supporting ecology studies of Hawaiian green sea turtle resting habits in Pearl Harbor. I have also been involved at the national and international levels as an ocean advocate, co-founding both the Marine Technology Society Early Career Ocean Professionals program and the UN Ocean Decade Early Career Ocean Professionals Network Programme. I was in the room at the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France in June 2025 when around 30 countries adopted the Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction to establish international protections for the High Seas. This experience and exposure have convinced me that the blue economy is society's pathway to sustainable development in the 21st century, and I look forward to working with the state to catalyze a new era of economic prosperity for Hawai'i that is anchored in the largest and most precious natural resource our species has the privilege to steward: our oceans. Thank you very much.

DATE: March 3, 2026

TO: **Senator Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair, Ways and Means**
Senator Sharon Moriwaki, Vice Chair, Ways and Means

FROM: George Yarbrough, IEDC Economic Recovery Corps Fellow

RE: **S.B. 2907, S.D. 1 – Relating to Marine Affairs**

PUBLIC DECISION DATE: **March 4, 2026**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee:

I submit this testimony in **support of Senate Bill 2907, S.D. 1**, which declares Hawai'i an ocean cluster, establishes the Office of Marine Affairs, creates the Marine Affairs Coordinator position, and appropriates funds to support the office's operations.

I am an Economic Recovery Corps Fellow with the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). Over the past several years, I have worked alongside the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) and other partners to support the development of Hawai'i's ocean technology ecosystem—convening stakeholders, attracting investment, and helping build the organizational infrastructure for a statewide blue economy strategy. I grew up in Hawai'i, returned home to start a family, and the question of how we build a more resilient, innovation-driven economy here is one I take personally.

Declaring Hawai'i an Ocean Cluster Sends a Critical Signal

Hawai'i's Blue Economy already supports nearly 100,000 jobs and generates \$9.2 billion in GDP. Formally recognizing Hawai'i as an ocean cluster signals to the local innovation community and federal funding agencies that ocean technology development is a state priority. This top-down commitment positions Hawai'i to pursue large-scale ecosystem development grants—as an example the Ocean Regional Opportunity and Innovation Act (S.1392/H.R.3048) if released and the NSF EPSCoR grant, which both would provide mult million dollar investments into community building around tech ecosystems. Without a formal designation and an operational office behind it, we risk being passed over for opportunities that other coastal states are already pursuing.

The Marine Affairs Coordinator Is the Foundation This Work Requires

The early months of a new office are foundational—they determine whether the right national and international partnerships are formed and whether the office enters the field with credibility or plays catch-up for years. The Marine Affairs Coordinator position funded in this bill is the essential first step: a dedicated, experienced professional who can continue the momentum that HTDC with the supporting consultants have created. Actions such as align cross-sector stakeholders, coordinate state agencies, and represent Hawai'i in national and international blue economy conversations.

To be effective from day one, the Coordinator will need access to specialized expertise and technical knowledge—whether through subject matter experts, university partnerships, or other flexible support structures. The groundwork has been laid over the past eight months through collaborative work across the ocean tech community, government agencies, and research institutions.

This Investment Positions Hawai'i to Compete

Successful ocean clusters in San Diego, Norway, Iceland, and Singapore did not emerge organically—they were built through deliberate, coordinated public investment. Hawai'i has the geography, the cultural heritage, the research institutions, and the industry base to compete at that level. What we have lacked is the institutional structure to convert those assets into coordinated economic development. S.B. 2907, S.D. 1 begins to provide that structure.

I urge the committee to pass S.B. 2907, S.D. 1 and ensure the investment of building a thriving ocean tech and innovation ecosystem.

Mahalo for your time and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

George Yarbrough

IEDC Economic Recovery Corps Fellow

gyarbrough@economicrecoverycorps.org

SB-2907-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 8:30:32 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alana Marsili	Testifying for Privateer Space Inc.	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Relating to Marine Affairs

Senate Committee on Ways and Means (WAM)

March 4, 2026 – 10:31 AM

Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Aloha and mahalo for the opportunity to submit testimony in strong support of SB2907.

Elevating the Office of Marine Affairs to the Governor’s Office appropriately reflects the central role the ocean plays in Hawai‘i’s economy, climate resilience, food security, and strategic position in the Pacific. Marine affairs are inherently cross-sector, intersecting with economic development, environmental stewardship, infrastructure, research, and federal coordination. Executive-level alignment strengthens Hawai‘i’s ability to act cohesively and strategically.

As a Hawai‘i-based company operating at the intersection of ocean intelligence, space-enabled sensing, and maritime resilience, we see firsthand how rapidly global attention is intensifying across the Pacific. Hawai‘i is uniquely positioned not only as an island state, but as a strategic hub for blue economy innovation and maritime domain awareness.

As this bill advances, it is essential that strong support for the Hawai‘i Ocean Cluster remain within the framework. The Ocean Cluster provides the implementation engine that connects local startups, research institutions, federal partners, and community stakeholders into measurable economic growth and workforce opportunity. Structural elevation must be paired with ecosystem coordination to fully realize the state’s potential.

SB2907 positions Hawai‘i to lead responsibly and proactively in the next era of ocean governance — aligning local values, economic diversification, and national priorities.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to pass SB2907 and maintain clear support for the Hawai‘i Ocean Cluster.

Mahalo for your leadership and consideration.



3 March 2026

TO: Chair Dela Cruz, Vice-Chair Moriwaki, and committee members

Statement of Ocean Era, Inc., before the
Senate
COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Scheduled for a hearing on
Wednesday, March 4, 2026, 10:31 PM, at
Conference Room 211

In **Support** of Senate Bill No. 2907

Dear Chair, Vice-Chair, and members of the Committees on Ways and Means,

Our company - Ocean Era, Inc. – and our team of scientists and technicians – all strongly support SB2907, that formally recognizes the State of Hawai'i as an ocean cluster and establishes the Office of Marine Affairs (OMA) and a Marine Affairs Task Force. This bill is a critical step to strengthen Hawai'i's leadership in the blue economy and grow economic opportunities across the Pacific Islands.

Earlier drafts had the OMA under the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC), which we felt was more appropriate. HTDC's recent strategic review recognized the potential value of the Blue Economy for future high-tech development in the state. We believe that HTDC is best positioned to nurture this initiative through policy, and strategic financial support.

Hawai'i is the U.S.'s largest island state in the Pacific and is ocean steward in the second largest EEZ. Our state is therefore uniquely positioned to innovate and attract federal, philanthropic, and private investments to sustain the local blue economy and address critical marine issues. Our blue economy contributes over \$10 billion to our GDP and supports 100,000 jobs, with marine business activity growing 23% in the past decade.

SB2907 lays the foundation for fulfilling Hawai'i's ocean destiny, by providing a structure and funding for dedicated leadership, and strategic coordination across the public and private sectors. This is essential for ensuring that economic development, technology advancement, and cultural stewardship are integrated parts of our ocean future – and our economic future. The bill will help attract new funding opportunities, create future-ready jobs, and support collaboration across both public and private sectors.

I moved to Hawaii early in my career as a marine biologist, because of the exceptional opportunities that were offered here in the ocean space. I have worked at NELHA for over 35

years, founding a number of aquaculture start-up companies. I have seen many grand aspirations falter and fail because they did not have the sufficient recognition of the importance of the initiative, or the fiscal support from the outset. I would hope that – through establishing Hawaii as an ocean cluster - that HTDC can move this initiative forward smoothly, with focus, and with broad community support.

We would be most grateful for your support through this bill, to ensure the success of HTDC's Ocean Cluster initiative, and the economic and cultural values that this will create and enhance.

Thank you in anticipation.

Sincerely, with aloha,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neil Anthony Sims".

Neil Anthony Sims, M.Sc.
Founder, CEO, Ocean Era, Inc.



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, March 04, 2026

10:31 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

In Support

Senate Bill No. 2907, SD1, Relating to Marine Affairs

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means:

The Office of the Governor **supports** Senate Bill No. 2907, SD1, and offers **comments**. This bill declares the State an ocean cluster; establishes the Office of Marine Affairs under the Governor's Office; creates and funds a Marine Affairs Coordinator position; and transfers the employees and functions of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Marine Affairs to the Office of Marine Affairs.

Hawai'i's ocean economy is foundational to our identity and prosperity. It spans commercial fisheries, maritime transportation, ocean science, defense, renewable energy, tourism, and coastal resilience, and is grounded in generations of Native Hawaiian stewardship and knowledge. This unique convergence of culture, geography, and innovation positions Hawai'i as a global leader in sustainable ocean development.

Creating an Office of Marine Affairs would strengthen coordination across state agencies, research institutions, and private-sector partners. A focused entity can better align policy, economic development, workforce initiatives, and environmental stewardship in a strategic and unified way.

That said, the Office of the Governor believes the new Office of Marine Affairs would be more effectively housed within the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC). While we appreciate the intent to place the Office directly within the Governor's Office, HTDC has the operational expertise and experience necessary to successfully launch and sustain a new innovation-driven entity of this nature. Additionally, we believe compensation for the Marine Affairs Coordinator should be determined by the department or agency in which the position is housed, rather than by the Office of the Governor.

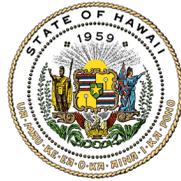
Testimony of the Office of the Governor
S.B. No. 2907, SD1
March 04, 2026
Page 2

By strengthening coordination and focus, this measure advances economic diversification, supports workforce development, and reinforces responsible ocean stewardship. It positions Hawai'i to compete globally while remaining grounded in our values and commitment to sustainability.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & BIOSECURITY
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI A KIA'I MEAOLA
1428 South King Street
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512
Phone: (808) 973-9560 FAX: (808) 973-9613

SHARON HURD
Chairperson
Board of Agriculture & Biosecurity

DEAN M. MATSUKAWA
Deputy to the Chairperson

**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOSECURITY**

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 4, 2026
10:31 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 211**

**SENATE BILL NO. 2907, SD1
RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Bill 2907, SD1. The bill declares that the State is an ocean cluster, establishes the Office of Marine Affairs under the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation for administrative purposes only, establishes the Marine Affairs Coordinator position, requires the Marine Affairs Coordinator to submit annual reports to the Governor and Legislature, transfers the employees and functions of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Marine Affairs to the Office of Marine Affairs and appropriates funds for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Marine Affairs Coordinator position. The Department of Agriculture and Biosecurity (DAB) supports this measure.

Declaring Hawaii an ocean cluster and establishing an Office of Marine Affairs articulates a clear, future-oriented vision that honors the State's identity as an ocean nation while positioning it to lead in a rapidly expanding global blue economy. The bill recognizes that Hawaii's long-standing relationship between people and sea, rooted in Native Hawaiian knowledge and stewardship, is not only a cultural foundation but also a strategic asset for shaping a more sustainable and innovative ocean-based development model that includes advanced, climate-smart aquaculture development under the DAB and the Aquaculture Development Program. By framing marine affairs around culture, stewardship, innovation, and coordinated ocean-cluster governance rather than narrow sectoral interests, SB 2907 provides a coherent framework within which restorative and commercial aquaculture initiatives can be aligned with broader economic growth, community well-being, and ocean health, consistent with Hawaii's values and responsibilities to future generations.

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



Written Statement of
Trung Lam, Executive Director

before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, March 4, 2026
10:31 am
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SB2907 SD1
RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee,

As the state agency dedicated to advancing technology-based economic development and positioning Hawai'i as a leader in the space and ocean sectors, the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) recognizes the significance of SB2907 SD1 in strengthening coordination and strategic focus around marine affairs. The establishment of the Office of Marine Affairs and the Marine Affairs Coordinator aligns with our mission to foster innovation and growth within the blue economy, a sector that holds substantial promise for Hawai'i's future.

HTDC particularly values the bill's recognition of Hawai'i as an "ocean cluster," which mirrors global best practices in innovation ecosystems where concentrated expertise and resources accelerate sectoral growth, and the creation of a task force that allows for the creation of a shared vision and strategy for our blue economy.

HTDC is here to support the blue economy in any capacity we can serve. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KA 'OIHANA KUMUWAIWAI 'ĀINA

P.O. BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

DAWN N.S. CHANG
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
FIRST DEPUTY

CIARA W.K. KAHAHANE
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES
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CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES
ENFORCEMENT
ENGINEERING
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION
LAND
STATE PARKS

Testimony of
RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE
Acting Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on
WAYS AND MEANS

Wednesday, March 4, 2026
10:31 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 2907, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS

Senate Bill 2907, Senate Draft 1 proposes to declare that the State is an ocean cluster; establishes the Office of Marine Affairs under the Governor's Office for administrative purposes only; establishes the Marine Affairs Coordinator position; requires the Marine Affairs Coordinator to submit annual reports to the Governor and Legislature; transfers the employees and functions of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Marine Affairs to the Office of Marine Affairs; and appropriates funds for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Marine Affairs Coordinator position. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) appreciates the intent of this bill and offers the following comments.**

The Department recognizes the great potential of expanding the State's blue economy through the designation of Hawai'i as an ocean cluster and the establishment of the Office of Marine Affairs. The pursuit of economic growth and technological innovation must be carefully integrated with sustainable resource management and respect for cultural knowledge and practices. As the agency tasked with managing and administering the aquatic life and aquatic resources of the state, the Department has developed and is currently implementing strategies to manage and restore aquatic ecosystems and fisheries for present and future generations. To ensure continuity and effective natural resource management, it is important that the duties bestowed on the Office of Marine Affairs in section 187A-C(a)(1) do not supplant the strategies and priorities of the Department, but rather integrate the Department's ongoing work.

Finally, the Department notes that chapter 187A, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS)—the chapter being proposed for the addition of a new part to be designated as “Marine Affairs”—governs the management of aquatic natural resources by the Department. It may be more appropriate to add this new statutory part to a different chapter or to establish an entirely new chapter.

Mahalo for the opportunity to comment on this measure.



PO Box 1095
Kurtistown, Hawaii
808-938-2840
Jim.wyban@gmail.com

March 3 2026

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

RE: **SB2907** Relating to Marine Affairs

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

My name is Dr. Jim Wyban. I am an aquaculture scientist and entrepreneur and a pioneer of Hawai'i's Specific Pathogen Free (SPF) shrimp broodstock industry. Over the past three decades, my work based at NELHA has helped position Hawai'i as a global leader in biosecure shrimp genetics and high-value aquaculture exports.

Over the past eight months, in support of the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC), I've been a part of a public-private network with 80+ organizations dedicated to supporting a sustainable blue economy and ocean innovation. I have seen firsthand through my 18 years as a tenant at NELHA plus 4 years as a Board member of NELHA the impact of marine aquaculture on the local economy. NELHA is a vibrant Ocean Cluster and the close association of the farms and projects there help everyone. If we could grow Hawaii's Ocean activities into a larger cluster there would be many benefits.

Bill **SB2907** establish a much-needed coordinated approach that recognizes the blue economy or "ocean-based economy" as a state priority and supports the creation of future-ready jobs and opportunities for the state. Currently, Hawai'i is the only U.S. state touching the Pacific Ocean without an ocean cluster, essentially a blue economy hub - this is a significant disadvantage for our state's competitiveness.

Mahalo for dedicating your time and services to our State. I hope you will consider supporting this legislation to enhance our economy and ensure that Hawai'i remains competitive with other coastal states.

Sincerely,

Jim Wyban PhD
Marine Genetics LLC



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

My name is Dr. Nicholas Ulm. I am the CEO and Founder of Hawaii Ocean Power Solutions (HOPS). My company produces Hālonā WEC, which is a wave energy buoy that aims to reduce the cost of powering our local blue economy activities. The buoy produces power on the same principles that makes the Halona blowhole spout and was developed as a part of my PhD at the University of Hawaii.

I have dedicated the last decade and the entirety of my adult life to addressing our state's food and energy security needs. I was born and raised here on Oahu; I would like to see more people like me continue to be able to make it here. My story is like that of so many of our kama'aina. I spent as much time in the ocean as I did in the classroom. I went to college in the continental US, received a degree in engineering, and unlike many of the friends I grew up with, I was privileged enough to be able to come back to the islands.

I returned to Hawaii and the UH Ocean & Resource Engineering PhD program because it is one of the best in the nation. This program is strengthened by a local blue economy, with companies that readily hire local graduates and strong innovation and workforce development programs, such as Purple Mai'a and KUPU. I want to emphasize that this blue economy structure supports an exceptionally high hire rate for graduates within one month of graduation. These positions are good-paying, local jobs that offer deep fulfillment, particularly for those of us who were raised here.

Although UH was able to help me to form the technological foundations, it was limited in how much they could support the commercialization. I was privileged to be supported by UH HITIDE and Hatch Blue through the Ocean Foundry Incubator program, both supported in part through the state. This was my first interaction with state supported business development and it was transformative to my company. But right when we started to see growth, it sunsetted and the federal administration changed. Everyone knew this was coming, but there was a lack of overarching coordination at a higher state level to make sure that this lapse didn't come for companies like mine.

So HOPS had to look elsewhere for support. Both programs directed us towards the NOAA Ocean Enterprise Accelerator. This is a federally funded program that was set up during the previous administration to bring blue economy technologies to full commercial readiness. The federal government administered this funding to ocean cluster organizations. As is made clear by this bill, Hawaii does not currently have that designation. We currently do not have the coordination at the state level to receive those funds to support our ocean-based economy.

So I again had to look to the continental US for support. I was privileged to be accepted into a program in Los Angeles called Braid Theory, which is located at Altasea. Their program networked us with all the other ocean clusters across the country and what I saw simultaneously

made me excited and disappointed. These clusters were only a few years old, but in the time since their founding, the companies that sprung up around them had rapidly grown from the coordination and connectivity the clusters provided. Why wasn't this something that was present in the community that I had come from?

The coordination at the state or municipal level brought together community organizations who had issues with technologists who had solutions to meet both needs. I saw these cluster organizers connecting harbor masters who had issues with pollution management with community organizers concerned on the pollution impacts and technology companies with solutions to pollution mitigation. The cluster worked to orchestrate collaboration to address the issue. It centered the process on shared values and provided avenues for trust, while helping the economy to grow. It was not exploitative or extractive, it was collaboratively competitive. It produced the excellence that we strive for here locally.

This can happen here in Hawaii. We managed to get started a federally supported pilot program here in Hawaii for blue economy technologies, that starts this summer. HTDC brought in the community and stakeholders to set the values. Hawaii companies pushed the feds to set up the program with these values in mind, and actually convinced them to buy in. One of these pilots is a training program for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders to become remotely controlled underwater vehicle pilots. This program will not require a college degree, is 4 weeks long, and can be used for verification of the efficacy of conservation projects under the Green Fee.

We have the grassroots foundations for a strong blue economy, it's time for the state to start better coordinating support for the local blue economy. HTDC has done great work this past year to coordinate with the local blue economy, but it still feels like efforts are happening in silo.

We need to enable them with better organizational coordination to pursue these federal opportunities. I implore you to designate Hawaii as an ocean cluster to create structures that will support kama'aina like me, who just want to keep generations of ocean loving people in Hawaii.

Hawai'i Ocean Power Solutions (HOPS) respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of **SB2907**.



DATE: 3/3/2026

TO: Rep. Donovan M Dela Cruz
Chair on Committee on Ways and Means

Rep. Sharon Moriwaki
Vice Chair on Committee on Ways and Means

FROM: Hohonu

RE: **SB 2907 – Relating to Marine Affairs**
HEARING DATE: 3/4/2026 10:31am

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Committee on Ways and Means

Hohonu **strongly supports** Senate Bill 2907 as a catalyst for growing the ecosystem of companies around the state working in the blue economy. Hohonu was founded in 2019 in Hawai'i by Dr. Brian Glazer, a professor at UH Manoa, to address persistent gaps in flood monitoring. Today, Hohonu operates flood monitoring networks across 18 states, including Hawai'i, serving federal partners, state agencies, counties, municipalities, institutions of higher education, and the private consulting sector. Hohonu is headquartered in Honolulu where it designs, develops and manufactures its water level sensors.

Leadership from the Office of Marine Affairs, situated under the Governor's Office, and the use of a coordinator for planning and executing a blue economy strategy, will have the positive effect of coordinating the local blue economy ecosystem and aligning stakeholders in both the private and public sector. Companies, especially hardware companies like Hohonu, thrive when there is a strong, connected ecosystem of companies growing the local skill base and supply chain. There are compounding benefits to having related companies in a single area: similar job opportunities allow local talent to develop related skills early on, knowledge spillover accelerates innovation, local suppliers and service providers can specialize and grow to meet increased demand and a cluster attracts more investment and more outside interest from buyers.

Hohonu is in a strong position to grow and thrive, but as we grow we will be constrained by the local availability of specialized talent, availability of suppliers capable of scaling with us and logistics challenges related to both fulfillment of orders and imports of necessary components. These challenges are neither unique to Hohonu nor new. The Office of Marine Affairs, under the Office of the Governor, is well positioned to address these problems across a blue economy

cluster and we have a better chance at solving them by dedicating a resource to focus on coordination across the many groups involved.

Hawai'i is a unique and challenging location to start a technology company and it requires a focused, highly collaborative effort to be successful. We believe Senate Bill 2907 will enable that collaboration and success and **we strongly support its passage**

Mahalo for your time and the opportunity to provide testimony.

Sincerely,

Noah Pentelovitch
Head of Hardware
Hohonu

SB-2907-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:14:23 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anthony John Escasa	Testifying for Pacific Impact Zone	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY
IN SUPPORT OF SB2907 (SD1)
RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS**

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

Pacific Impact Zone respectfully submits this testimony in strong support of SB2907 (SD1), which declares Hawai‘i an ocean cluster and establishes the Office of Marine Affairs within the Office of the Governor.

Pacific Impact Zone is currently working with the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation through a public-private partnership to establish a shared-use advanced manufacturing facility in Hawai‘i. A significant portion of the companies we support operate in ocean technology, maritime systems, marine infrastructure modernization, and dual-use applications. SB2907 provides the structural coordination necessary to align marine innovation, policy, and commercialization in a way that directly supports production-oriented infrastructure.

The Legislature’s findings appropriately recognize that the blue economy is one of the fastest-growing sectors globally and that Hawai‘i is uniquely positioned to lead due to its geography, research capacity, and cultural heritage. The bill also acknowledges that remaining competitive requires modernization of technology, infrastructure, and manufacturing capability. From an operator’s perspective, this modernization is not abstract. It requires coordinated strategy, regulatory clarity, workforce alignment, and sustained industry engagement.

The establishment of the Office of Marine Affairs and the Marine Affairs Coordinator position creates a single point of accountability for developing and implementing a statewide marine affairs strategy and complementary ocean technology and innovation development strategy. The duties outlined in the bill, including value chain assessments, identification of regulatory and infrastructure barriers, project and investment readiness programming, and coordination across agencies, address the fragmentation that has historically limited execution in this sector.

For advanced manufacturing operators like Pacific Impact Zone, clarity of strategy and coordination directly affects facility planning, equipment acquisition, workforce training pathways, and long-term sustainability. Ocean technology companies require manufacturing capability, compliance support, capital access, and federal alignment to move from concept to

deployment. SB2907 strengthens the connective framework that allows those elements to function together rather than in isolation.

We also support the inclusion of diverse state agencies, the University of Hawai‘i system, and business sector representatives within the Marine Affairs Task Force. This cross-sector structure increases the likelihood that policy decisions reflect operational realities and industry demand. Sustained coordination between marine affairs leadership and HTDC will be especially important to ensure that ocean cluster development is tightly linked to commercialization and production capacity.

SB2907 does more than recognize the blue economy. It establishes governance, accountability, and implementation mechanisms that can move Hawai‘i from aspiration to structured execution. When combined with investments in HTDC staffing, federal matching capability, and manufacturing assistance programs, this measure strengthens the foundation for durable, innovation-driven economic diversification.

Pacific Impact Zone respectfully urges the Committee to pass SB2907 (SD1).

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



WaiHome LLC
59-477 Hoalike Road
Haleiwa, HI, 96712

Statement of
Gregory Wong
Co-Founder and COO
WaiHome LLC
before the

Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Wednesday, March 4th, 2026
10:31 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SB2907 SD1
RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee on Ways and Means.

WaiHome LLC stands in strong support of SB2907, SD1. As a Hawaii-based wastewater startup funded by the NSF, NOAA, and HTDC, we believe that formally recognizing Hawaii as an "ocean cluster" and establishing an Office of Marine Affairs is a vital investment in our state's economic future. We support this measure for the following reasons:

Commercializing Local Innovation: SB2907, SD1 focuses on promoting "technology-enabled marine industries". For WaiHome, this coordination is the difference between our excavation-free wastewater systems remaining a "research project" and becoming a scalable manufacturing business that helps Hawaii's 83,000 cesspool owners.

Retaining Technical Talent: By addressing regulatory barriers and streamlining the blue economy, this bill ensures that startups like ours can continue to hire from the local workforce. Currently, Hawaii-born innovation often moves to the mainland to scale; this bill creates the infrastructure to keep those high-paying tech jobs here. At WaiHome, we are proud to say that our team was hired 100% locally.

Protecting Hawaii's Primary Asset: This bill recognizes that our environment is our economy. At WaiHome, we use advanced technology to protect our reefs from pollution. We are living proof that Hawaii can lead a global industry in coastal protection technology by leveraging our unique geographic and cultural expertise.

I urge the committee to pass SB2907, SD1 to ensure Hawaii remains at the forefront of the global blue economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gregory Wong", written in a cursive style.

Gregory Wong
Co-founder and COO
WaiHome LLC



OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS

TESTIMONY WITH COMMENTS ON SENATE BILL 2907 SD1

RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS

Ke Kōmike ‘Aha Kenekoa o ke Ki‘ina Hana a me nā Kumuwaiwai
(Senate Committee on Ways and Means)

Ke Kapitala ‘o Hawai‘i
(Hawai‘i State Capitol)

Malaki 4, 2026

10:31 am

Lumi 211

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

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) provides **COMMENTS** on **SB2907 SD1**, which declares the State an ocean cluster and establishes the Office of Marine Affairs within the Office of the Governor for administrative purposes only. The measure further establishes a Marine Affairs Coordinator and names the Chief Executive Officer of OHA, or designee, as a member of the Marine Affairs Task Force.

OHA appreciates being expressly named as a statutory member of the Marine Affairs Task Force and, if enacted, willingly accepts this kuleana. OHA has longstanding experience in marine governance, including serving as Co-Trustee of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument and Co-Manager of Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Sanctuary. OHA is also statutorily charged with assessing the policies and practices of other agencies impacting Native Hawaiians and Hawaiians pursuant to HRS §10-3. OHA’s participation in this task force therefore brings both beneficiary advocacy and constitutional public trust expertise to the statewide marine policy discussion.

SB2907 SD1 differs institutionally from prior blue economy proposals in that it situates the Office of Marine Affairs within the Office of the Governor rather than within a technology development corporation. This placement elevates marine affairs coordination to the executive level and centralizes policy development across agencies including land and natural resources, harbors, agriculture, energy, and technology. From an institutional standpoint, this structure provides OHA with greater visibility and earlier engagement in statewide marine policy formation. The bill positions the task force not merely as an

economic development advisory body, but as a coordinating mechanism capable of shaping executive recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.

At the same time, the executive-level placement increases the significance of the task force's role and underscores the need for clear stewardship guardrails. While **SB2907 SD1** directs the Office to develop a statewide strategy that prioritizes sustainable use, conservation, and stewardship of marine resources, the enumerated duties emphasize competitiveness, commercialization pathways, capital attraction, and technology-enabled marine industry growth. Accordingly, as one step towards ensuring greater balance in this bill, OHA respectfully request the following amendments to the coordinator's enumerated duties at §187A-D(b)(1), page 11, line 10, would be amended to read:

"...determine financial requirements for the total and optimum development of the State's marine resources based on the goals and needs of the State, consistent with constitutional and statutory mandates related to natural resource protection."

Explicitly embedding a clear framework would ensure that executive-level marine coordination strengthens—not supplants—existing conservation safeguards.

SB2907 SD1 presents an opportunity to improve interagency alignment and reduce fragmentation in marine governance. With appropriate guardrails, the measure can support innovation and economic diversification while maintaining Hawai'i's obligations to protect reef ecosystems, cultural practices, and public trust resources for present and future generations.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to provide comments on this important measure.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR



WENDY GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
HUI HO'OU LU AINA MAHIAI

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
March 4, 2026
10:31 a.m.
Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

SENATE BILL NO. 2907, SD1
RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS

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

The Agribusiness Development Corporation (ADC) **supports** S.B. 2907, SD1, which would designate Hawai'i as an ocean cluster and establish an Office of Marine Affairs within the Office of the Governor for administrative purposes, including creation of a Marine Affairs Coordinator, annual reporting, and the transfer of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Marine Affairs into the new office.

Hawai'i's geography makes the ocean economy foundational—not ancillary—to statewide resilience, workforce development, and economic diversification. A formal “ocean cluster” model provides a practical framework to coordinate innovation, commercialization, permitting alignment, workforce pipelines, and applied research across agencies, UH, and industry. S.B. 2907, SD1, provides a targeted governance structure to do that through the Office of the Governor while maintaining clear lines of accountability through required reporting.

Other jurisdictions have used cluster-based approaches to accelerate collaboration and scale “blue tech” and sustainable aquaculture:

- **San Diego (Port-led Blue Economy Incubator):** The Port of San Diego’s Blue Economy Incubator has documented leveraged R&D funding and direct support for aquaculture and blue tech pilot projects, demonstrating how an incubator/cluster approach can translate innovation into investable projects.
- **Washington State (maritime cluster/economy):** Washington’s maritime sector is a large, measurable economic engine—supporting **174,300 jobs**, **\$14.4B** in labor income, and **\$45.9B** in business revenues (2022), underscoring how coordinated maritime and ocean-economy strategies can drive scale and jobs.
- **Norway (ocean industries + aquaculture at scale):** Norway’s seafood sector alone reached a **record export value of NOK 181.5B in 2025**, illustrating the economic potential of ocean-industry ecosystems when innovation, production, and market access are aligned.
- **Iceland (cluster model + fisheries value):** Iceland’s “ocean cluster” approach has been recognized as a deliberate strategy to connect seafood, innovation, and entrepreneurship, while national fisheries export value remained substantial at **~ISK 347B in 2024**—evidence of the scale at stake in ocean-based value chains.

ADC notes that aquaculture is explicitly included within Hawai‘i’s statutory definition of “agriculture” under HRS §163D-2, reinforcing that aquaculture and marine food production are not “new” to the State’s agricultural development mandate—they are a core component of it. Accordingly, a statewide blue economy ocean cluster complements ADC’s responsibilities and will help Hawai‘i better coordinate food security, innovation, and ocean-resource stewardship across agencies and partners.

S.B. 2907, SD1, is a practical step to position Hawai‘i for coordinated, investable growth in the blue economy—supporting innovation, jobs, and ocean

SENATE BILL NO. 2907, SD1
RELATING TO MARINE AFFAIRS
Page 3 of 3

stewardship through an identifiable cluster strategy and a clear point of coordination within the Office of the Governor. For these reasons, ADC respectfully urges the Committee to PASS S.B. 2907, SD1.

SB-2907-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/3/2026 10:31:00 AM

Testimony for WAM on 3/4/2026 10:31:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lindsey Wilbur	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. My name is Lindsey Wilbur born and raised in Kāneʻohe, aspiring to do innovative work in Hawaii in aquaculture and agriculture as a student at Windward Community College in the Agripharmatech program. I support SB2907 SD1 with amendments. Hawai‘i needs durable coordination for ocean innovation and the blue economy, with clear accountability and annual reporting. I believe this could be included in a near-term budget cycle, with funding for one full-time Marine Affairs Coordinator, and require public reporting with measurable outcomes. I believe the social, cultural and economic returns will be abundant. Mahalo for your consideration.

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

**Wednesday, March 4, 2026, at 10:31AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

RE: SB2907 SD1 Relating to Marine 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 testifies in strong support of Senate Bill 2907 Senate Draft 1 (SB2907 SD1), which declares that the State is an ocean cluster. Establishes the Office of Marine Affairs under the Governor's Office for administrative purposes only. Establishes the Marine Affairs Coordinator position. Requires the Marine Affairs Coordinator to submit annual reports to the Governor and Legislature. Transfers the employees and functions of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Marine Affairs to the Office of Marine Affairs. Appropriates funds for one full-time equivalent (1.0 FTE) Marine Affairs Coordinator position.

SB2907 SD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Small Business. This bill promotes the growth of Hawaii’s blue economy, encompassing industries such as marine technology, offshore renewable energy, aquaculture, ocean data systems, and marine robotics—all sectors that can build a stronger, more resilient Hawaii economy.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that the global ocean economy could exceed \$3 trillion by 2030. With Hawaii’s strategic geographic position in the Pacific, access to world-class ocean research assets, and a talented local workforce, the State is well-positioned to serve as a regional hub for these emerging industries. According to analyses by UHERO, innovation-driven sectors provide higher-than-average wages and greater economic stability. Developing a blue economy will not only diversify our industries beyond tourism—which still accounts for 17.1% of the State’s GDP (2023)—but also generate high paying jobs for local residents.

Furthermore, Hawaii currently imports about 85–90% of its food and about 67% of its energy (2024). Expanding ocean innovation in areas like offshore renewable energy and sustainable aquaculture supports State goals to reduce dependence on imports, enhance food and energy security, and work towards reaching 100% clean energy by 2045.

We respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 2907 Senate Draft 1. 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.