



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

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Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
**Director**  
Department of Business Economic Development & Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

Thursday, February 5, 2026  
1:00 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**SB3084**  
**RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) submits this testimony in strong support of SB3084, which strengthens Hawai'i's ability to leverage federal research and development funding to support innovation, commercialization, and economic diversification.

SB3084 expands the allowable uses of Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) grant funds to include:

- (1) providing grants to applicants for qualifying federal research and development awards; and
- (2) providing matching funds for recipients of those federal awards and related contracts.

This statutory clarification is important. Federal research programs, including the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs, are highly competitive and bring significant external capital and technical validation into Hawai'i. However, companies often require additional state-level support

to successfully compete for these awards and to advance projects beyond the research phase toward commercialization.

By explicitly authorizing grants for applicants and matching funds for award recipients, SB3084 allows the State to more effectively amplify federal dollars, reduce financial barriers for Hawai'i-based companies, and increase the likelihood that innovative businesses will grow and remain in Hawai'i. This approach reflects national best practices in technology-based economic development and is particularly important for small businesses operating in capital-intensive sectors.

From DBEDT's perspective, SB3084 represents a high-leverage investment strategy that supports job creation, workforce development, and long-term economic resilience. The bill also provides clarity and flexibility for HTDC to administer these grants responsibly and in alignment with statewide economic priorities.

For these reasons, DBEDT strongly supports SB3084.

Written Statement of  
**Trung Lam, Executive Director**

before the  
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

Thursday, February 5, 2026  
1:00 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
SB3084  
RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Chair Decoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee.

As the state agency dedicated to advancing Hawai'i's technology sector, the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) is committed to fostering innovation, supporting research and development, and catalyzing economic growth across key industries such as the blue economy, energy, and advanced manufacturing. SB3084 is of critical importance to HTDC, as it expands the allowable uses of HTDC grant funds to include providing matching grants for applicants and recipients of qualifying federal research and development awards. This expansion directly supports HTDC's mission to make Hawai'i a leading technology innovation hub in the Pacific, particularly in the space and ocean sectors.

By enabling HTDC to match federal research and development funding, SB3084 strengthens the state's ability to attract and retain high-potential technology companies and entrepreneurs. Federal programs, such as the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) awards, are nationally recognized as effective vehicles for stimulating private sector innovation and commercialization.

Expanding the scope of HTDC's grantmaking authority also aligns with best practices in technology-based economic development. Other states have demonstrated that leveraging state funds to match federal research dollars accelerates commercialization, job creation, and the development of strategic sectors such as renewable energy technology, biotech, and ocean sciences. This approach is particularly important for Hawai'i, given the unique challenges and opportunities associated with our geographic location and emerging industries.

HTDC respectfully recommends that the Legislature ensure clear guidelines for the administration and oversight of these expanded grant programs, to maintain transparency and maximize impact. We further encourage ongoing dialogue with stakeholders to identify priority sectors and ensure that matching funds are allocated in ways that advance Hawai'i's long-term innovation and economic development goals. Thank you for your consideration of this important measure.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair**

**Thursday, February 5, 2026, at 1:00PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**RE: SB3084 Relating to the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation**

Aloha e Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, 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 3084 (SB3084), which expands the allowable uses of Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation grant funds to include providing grants to applicants for qualifying federal research and development awards and matching funds for recipients of those awards and related contracts.

SB 3084 supports the Economic Action pillar of the Chamber's 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii by facilitating Hawaii's access to federal research and development investments and stimulating private sector innovation. The Economic Action pillar emphasizes strategic investments that enhance competitiveness, broaden Hawaii's economic base, and grow high-value jobs. Expanding HTDC's grant flexibility to support innovators pursuing federal R&D awards aligns with this priority by enabling local firms to compete more effectively for highly competitive national funding and accelerate commercialization of emerging technologies.

SB 3084 also advances our Small Business pillar by providing critical resources to small, locally based companies that may otherwise lack the capital and technical support needed to harness federal research funding opportunities. Many small businesses rely on federal grant programs as a catalyst for growth. This bill directly stimulates Hawaii's innovation ecosystem, by allowing HTDC to preempt opportunities for federal matching grants that serve as a catalyst for innovation and business development.

We respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 3084. 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.

**TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL NO 3084, RELATING TO  
THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

Position: **Support**

To the honorable Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair; the honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair; and Members of the Committee on Economic Development & Tourism

Please accept this testimony in **strong support** of this bill, and its intentions to expand the allowable use of funds of the Hawaii Technology and Development Corporation to be used to support the Small Business Innovation Research (HSBIR) matching funding program.

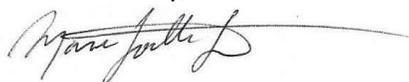
Simonpietri Enterprises LLC is an O'ahu-based small business developing innovative ways to recycle waste generated in Hawai'i into renewable fuels and other beneficial recycled-material products for use in Hawai'i. We strongly support the HTDC's matching funding programs and, as a previous awardee, SEL recognizes the matching funds program as a powerful way to multiply the State's funding to accelerate innovation and facilitate local manufacturing investment. The requirement to match funding to federal funds awards in the HSBIR program is a prudent way to leverage federal agency technical expertise and reward innovation while maintaining a level playing field.

In the 5+ years since launching our Aloha Carbon technology and project development effort with our first-ever SBIR award from the USDA, we have grown our team from one to ten skilled science, engineering and other industry adjacent positions, matured our innovations from concept to pilot scale, and secured a site in Campbell Industrial Park to be the future home for Aloha Carbon. We used the HSBIR funds in areas that the federal funds cannot cover: to support workforce development efforts through paid internships, five of whom are University of Hawaii undergraduate interns, three of whom are now full-time employees on our team. We also applied for and received our first-ever patent and now are now working on four international patents.

We are currently designing a small manufacturing facility, the Aloha Sustainable Materials Recycling and Fertilizer Facility (Aloha SMRFF) in Campbell Industrial Park in Kapolei. Aloha SMRFF will serve as a pilot to Aloha Carbon and will divert over 200 tons per day of construction and demolition waste from the state's only C&D landfill, and remanufacture that waste to displace over 10,000 tons per year of imported fossil fuels, fertilizers, and building materials. Thanks in part to the assistance from HTDC and HSBIR, we were able to compete at the national level and win a \$4 million manufacturing grant from the USDA, to build the Aloha Fertilizer manufacturing line of our Aloha SMRFF project. State matching funds like the ones provided by HTDC allow us to actually bring in these federal funds and build this facility to employ 2 dozen skilled workers. This facility is the first step to demonstrating our Aloha Carbon manufacturing process to manufacture pipeline-quality renewable fuel from solid waste generated in Honolulu.

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

Sincerely,



Marie-Joelle Simonpietri

President

*About Simonpietri Enterprises LLC*

Simonpietri Enterprises is a Kailua, Hawaii-based woman- and veteran-owned small business with ten employees, focused on technical innovation and first-of-kind project development of emerging clean and renewable technologies. Since founding in 2006, we have helped dozens of small and large industrial companies in Hawaii, the continental U.S., Australia, and Canada improve the environmental and economic sustainability of their operations through technical and business advice in renewable energy conversion, waste reduction and re-use, and greenhouse gas lifecycle impact reduction. Simonpietri Enterprises' founder and employees have participated in the strategy, planning, design, financing, development, construction, and energy efficiency/greenhouse gas reduction/sustainability renovation for over \$400 million in new renewable and first-of-kind sustainable fuel projects over the past 15 years. Since launching the Aloha Carbon waste-to-fuel technical development process in August 2020, Simonpietri Enterprises is now developing renewable fuel production facilities in its own right, starting with the Aloha Sustainable Materials Recycling and Fertilizer Facility (SMRFF) in Kapolei, Hawaii to divert wastes generated in Honolulu from landfilling and transform it to renewable fuel, organic fertilizer, and recycled-material building products.



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**Eddie Asato**, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*  
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**Maile Miyashiro**, C&S Wholesale, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Economic Development and Tourism

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: February 5, 2026

TIME: 1pm

RE: SB3084 Relating to the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure to expand the allowable uses of Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) grant funds. As the measure notes, "Hawaii's research and development ecosystem requires flexible funding to leverage federal investment opportunities." Many of our members and Made in Hawaii Festival vendors have successfully used HTDC programs over the year to grow, increase manufacturing capacity, modernize, and become more technologically enabled. When local companies are supported by the state and given the opportunity to grow and thrive our economy becomes more stronger, more diverse, and everyone benefits. We urge the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



**LATE**

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

Before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

Friday, February 5, 2026  
1:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

In Support of  
**SB3084 RELATING TO THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION**

To: Chair Senator Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Senator Glenn Wakai and Members of the Committee

From: Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Founder & CEO, OCEANIT

Re: Testimony in Support of SB3084

Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair and Committee Members:

Testimony in Support for SB3084

Oceanit Laboratories, Inc. offers this testimony in support of SB3084 with a proposed amendment to ensure the bill preserves its intended focus on small businesses.

Oceanit is a Hawaii-based science and engineering company that has been developing breakthrough technologies in Hawaii for 40 years. We have been active participants in federal SBIR and STTR programs and understand firsthand how critical state matching funds are to helping Hawaii's small businesses compete for and successfully execute federal research and development awards.

We support this bill's intent to expand HTDC's authority to provide matching grants for a broader range of federal R&D programs beyond SBIR and STTR. Federal agencies including ARPA-E, DOE, NOAA, and DoD increasingly offer competitive R&D funding opportunities that require non-federal matching funds. Enabling HTDC to support Hawaii businesses pursuing these opportunities will help our state's innovation ecosystem remain competitive and capture federal investment that might otherwise go to other states.

While we support expanding HTDC's matching fund authority, we note that the current bill language in subsections (b)(4) and (b)(5) refers broadly to "any business in Hawaii" without specifying a small business qualification. This differs from subsections (b)(1) through (b)(3), which are inherently limited to small businesses by virtue of their reference to SBIR and STTR programs.

To preserve the legislature's apparent intent to focus these resources on small businesses, we respectfully suggest adding a new subsection (c) with the following language:

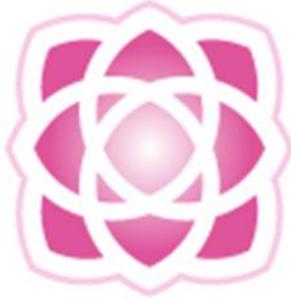
*"(c) For purposes of subsection (b)(4) and (b)(5), an eligible business shall:*

- (1) Be organized for profit with a place of business located in Hawaii;*
- (2) Be more than fifty per cent owned and controlled by one or more individuals who are citizens of, or permanent resident aliens in, the United States; and*
- (3) Have no more than five hundred employees, including the employees of any affiliates."*

This language mirrors the eligibility criteria established by the U.S. Small Business Administration for SBIR participation under 13 C.F.R. § 121.702, ensuring consistency with existing federal standards while giving the legislature direct control over eligibility criteria.

We believe this amendment strengthens the bill by clarifying legislative intent and ensuring that HTDC's expanded matching fund authority continues to serve Hawaii's small business innovation community.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.



**MAUI**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
VOICE OF BUSINESS

**LATE**

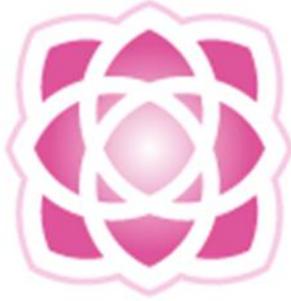
**HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM  
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, SENATE CONFERENCE ROOM 229  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026 AT 1:00 P.M.**

To The Honorable Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Members of the Committee on Economic Development & Tourism

**SUPPORT SB3084 RELATING TO  
THE HAWAII TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

As an organization committed to advancing economic growth and diversification in Hawai'i, we recognize the importance of fostering innovation and supporting local businesses, especially as Maui and the broader state continue to recover from recent economic challenges. The Maui Chamber of Commerce supports SB3084, as it proposes to expand the allowable uses of Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) grant funds to include matching federal research and development awards and related contracts. This measure directly addresses the need for targeted investment in Hawai'i's technology and innovation sectors, which are critical to building a resilient and diversified economy.

Expanding HTDC's grant authority to provide matching funds for federal research and development awards will help local businesses leverage significant external resources, attract high-quality jobs, and stimulate the creation of new industries beyond tourism. Access to matching funds is often a key factor in a company's ability to secure competitive federal grants, and this support can make Hawai'i-based firms more attractive to investors and partners. By empowering local companies to compete on a national stage, this bill aligns with best practices for regional economic development and innovation policy.



# MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

Senate Committee on Economic Development & Tourism  
February 5, 2026  
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Furthermore, the proposed expansion of grant eligibility is consistent with our policy priorities of supporting long-term economic success factors such as productivity, human capital, and investment in high-value sectors. Research has shown that public investment in research and development can yield significant spillover benefits, including the growth of technology clusters, increased commercialization of new products, and a more robust entrepreneurial ecosystem.

We appreciate the Legislature's efforts toward economic diversification and ask that SB3084 moves forward.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap  
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.