



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

KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI  
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'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

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY**

Friday, April 17, 2026  
8:30 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 430

In consideration of  
**SCR170 SD1**

**SUPPORTING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SISTER STATE RELATIONSHIP WITH  
NEW ZEALAND TO ADVANCE BIOSECURITY, CONSERVATION, PROTECTION OF  
ENDANGERED SPECIES, AND OTHER ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN.**

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and members of the Committee, the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports **SCR 170 SD1**, which supports the establishment of a sister state relationship with New Zealand to advance biosecurity, conservation, protection of endangered species, and other issues of mutual concern.

New Zealand and Hawai'i share deep connections as Pacific island communities with strong indigenous heritage, cultural leadership, and environmental stewardship. Both face ongoing threats from invasive species, habitat loss, and biodiversity decline—challenges that endanger ecosystems, agricultural sustainability, and native wildlife.

New Zealand is recognized globally as a leader in biosecurity and conservation, maintaining an integrated system of prevention, management, and eradication of harmful pests and diseases. Its model includes coordinated border control, domestic

monitoring, and community-driven protection strategies that keep its native species and ecosystems resilient.

New Zealand's network of 35 protected sanctuaries, such as the pioneering Zealandia sanctuary in Wellington, demonstrates the effectiveness of predator-exclusion areas that allow native birds, reptiles, and plants to recover and thrive. These examples offer proven frameworks that can help Hawai'i expand and strengthen its own endangered species recovery and native habitat restoration efforts.

Additionally, the New Zealand FoodBowl, a food innovation network that brings together expertise, technologies, and infrastructure for food innovators and entrepreneurs, is the model on which Hawai'i's Food and Product Innovation Network (FPIN) is being developed.

A formal cooperative relationship would create new opportunities for knowledge exchange, collaborative research, policy innovation, and shared environmental strategies. This partnership would contribute directly to Hawai'i's ongoing work in biosecurity, conservation, climate resilience, food and product innovation—areas vital to our islands' long-term ecological and economic well-being.

Since New Zealand is a country and its subnational governments are not equivalent to states or provinces, DBEDT supports exploring a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Hawai'i and New Zealand.

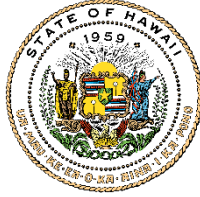
It should be noted that HB2474 HD1 SD1 seeks to broaden the State's authority to enter into nonbinding international cooperative agreements which goes beyond traditional sister-state partnerships by enabling collaboration with national governments, ministries, and regional organizations throughout the Asia-Pacific region. Passage of this legislation would strengthen Hawai'i's ability to enter a global partnership with New Zealand.

For these reasons, DBEDT is pleased to support SCR170 SD1 and the establishment of an international cooperative agreement between the State of Hawai'i and New Zealand.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

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

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



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KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

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

Before the Senate Committee on  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Friday April 17, 2026  
8:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 430

In consideration of  
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 170, SENATE DRAFT 1

Senate Concurrent Resolution 170, Senate Draft 1, encourages the establishment of a partnership with Aotearoa New Zealand to advance biosecurity, conservation, the protection of endangered species, and other areas of mutual interest. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports this measure.**

The Department supports this resolution because the exchange of knowledge, practices, and innovations in biosecurity, conservation, native species protection, and the application of traditional ecological knowledge offers significant benefits to both Hawai'i and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Hawai'i and Aotearoa New Zealand share similar ecological and cultural contexts as island systems with high levels of endemism and vulnerability. Both are home to unique assemblages of native birds, plants, and insects that face ongoing threats from invasive species, emerging diseases, and habitat degradation. Additionally, both regions have deep indigenous traditions that emphasize stewardship of natural resources. Aotearoa New Zealand has implemented comprehensive biosecurity measures at its borders, including strict declaration requirements, inspections, and enforcement mechanisms, to protect its natural and cultural resources, or *taonga*. The country also employs advanced predator control strategies and integrates *te ao Māori*, an indigenous worldview, into conservation planning and management.

The Department supports the development of a formal partnership with Aotearoa New Zealand's Department of Conservation and Ministry for Primary Industries, which oversees biosecurity. The Department has consulted with the State of Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), which recommended developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to guide this collaboration. The Department is currently exploring this opportunity and engaging in discussions to establish a partnership through an MOU.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.