DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

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Statement of

THEODORE E. LIU
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism

before the
COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TAXATION

Tuesday, February 12, 2008
9:25 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

in consideration of
SB 2852
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION.

Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Espero, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development & Taxation.

The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the concept of economic diversification. There have been many good ideas introduced this legislative session that support the State's economic development goals. We note, however, that this appropriation was not included in the Executive's Supplemental Budget, and request that this appropriation not displace the priorities contained in that budget.

We will continue to work with the economic development boards, the Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii, the Hawaii Science & Technology Council and others to help diversify the State's economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

February 11, 2008

Honorable Carol Fukunaga, Chair
Honorable Will Espero, Vice Chair
  And Members of the
State Senate Committee on Economic Development and Taxation

Dear Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Espero and Committee Members:

RE: SB 2852, Relating to Economic Development Diversification

The Kaua`i Economic Development Board (KEDB) **strongly supports SB 2852**, relating to economic development diversification.

For the past several years, KEDB, through its private/public partnerships, have been very active and successful in leveraging resources from federal, state, county and the private sector to create economic opportunities for Kaua`i. We continue to work collaboratively on various innovative projects to foster and nurture technology growth and other diversified industries in renewable energy and food and fuel sustainability, including recruiting and building an appropriately trained workforce to support that growth.

We thank the 2007 Legislature for appropriating funds for the 3Ts Program (Act 271) and despite the delay in the Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii (EDAH) receiving such funds, KEDB, through its Aloha `Ike Grant Program and Women in Technology Program (administered by Maui Economic Development Board statewide), has been able to start a Project EAST Program at Kaua`i High School on a limited basis while still lending support to the existing program at Chiefess Kamakahelei Middle School.

The funds appropriated last year through Act 271 and funding for SB 2852 this year, together with our local public/private resources, will serve to broaden and expand our existing efforts and augment the ability for more organizations, as appropriate, to work together on economic development diversification activities.

Sincerely yours,

Mattie Yoshioka
President & CEO

February 11, 2008

RE: Senate Bill SB2852, Strong Support

Dear Chair Fukunaga and Committee Members:

The EAST Initiative model has been recognized nationally as an innovative, relevant, and successful approach to education. It is now a proven model within our Hawaii public schools, that is tested for further expansion and replication. Delivered from within the Department of Education, EAST is a project-based, service-learning oriented class that provides students with the most current, high-end technologies available in some of the most progressive fields in the world. EAST is more than a class offering and much more than a "computer class". At its heart, EAST is a coordinated attempt to provide today's students with an educational atmosphere that allows them to gain insight into their own abilities to acquire and use information, solve problems and gain valuable experience in using this technology.

EAST students routinely interact with hardware and software in animation, computer aided design, engineering design, visualization, database design, webpage design, programming, office automation, global positioning systems, and geographic information systems. The students, working in teams, tackle sophisticated service-oriented projects. In the process of solving these problems, they learn to become creative, intuitive, adaptable learners who can solve unpredictable, real-world problems.

Ten Hawaii schools including Maui High, Baldwin, Lahainaluna, Kihei Charter, Chiefess Kamakahelei middle school, King Kekaulike, Keaau, Molokai High and Middle School are successfully delivering EAST. Several representative teams will be participating in the upcoming National EAST Conference held in Arkansas. The students will be given the opportunity to showcase their projects and the impact that they make on both their school and community to over 2000 conference participants. The opportunity to compete on a National level is a once in a lifetime opportunity.

Project EAST gives the students a chance to see their real potential — choosing to become professionals in areas that previously weren't even a thought or an option. EAST enables the students to see themselves as winners, and truly raises the bar in their expectations for life.

MEDB, in partnership with our sister Economic Development Boards, have been honored to facilitate the County, Federal, and private sector investment in Project EAST, including contributions to upgrade hardware, software and training opportunities. EAST is a proven workforce development model in our state, with an existing infrastructure ---- that is now paying dividends. We ask for your continued investment in this tested model to sustain and expand its reach to more students in our public school system.

Thank you for your time and consideration. It is greatly appreciated.

Mahalo,

Isla Young
Project Manager, Women In Technology
Hawaii State EAST Coordinator