



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

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Statement of
Luis P. Salaveria, Director
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
before the
House Committee on Veterans, Military, International Affairs & Culture and Arts
Monday, February 2, 2015
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

In consideration of
HB654
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chair Cachola, Vice Chair Ito and members of the House Committee on Veterans, Military, International Affairs & Culture and Arts.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) supports the intent of HB654 that establishes the China Hawaii Economic Council within DBEDT provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget.

A council such as that proposed can be an effective vehicle to promote, support and increase investment and trade from China into and with Hawaii, just as the former Japan Hawaii Economic Council (JHEC) did regarding Japan investment and trade several years ago.

It should be pointed out that the JHEC was completely private sector driven and members on both the Japan and Hawaii side were solely from the private sector, which was the key to its success. This bill, unlike a similar bill, HB 648, does not set the foundation for the establishment of a Council that is private sector led. DBEDT prefers HB648.

Funding in the amount of \$150,000 for an executive director in FY 16-17 is necessary. Funding in the amount of \$300,000 is necessary for an executive director and to produce the inaugural general meeting/conference in FY17-18 in Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.