

EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
KE KE'ENA O KE KIA'ĀINA

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

Testimony of  
**Josh Green, M.D.**  
Governor, State of Hawaii

Before the  
**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism**

Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

In consideration of  
**Governor's Message No. 595**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism:

I respectfully request your favorable consideration of Governor's Message No. 595, appointment of James Tokioka to serve as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

James brings to the position of Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism his longstanding experience and service in both State and county governments. James's sixteen-year service as a State Representative and decade-long tenure on the Kauai County Council, as well as his work experience in the private sector, have equipped him with the skills and ability to lead DBEDT and oversee economic development in our State. Prior to assuming the Interim Director position at DBEDT, James served as Deputy Director of Transportation, Airports Division, where he gained experience and familiarity serving in a core leadership capacity in the Executive Branch.

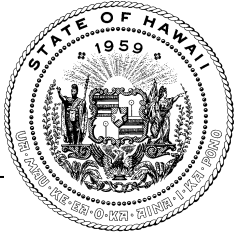
Besides his years of public service, James also worked in the private sector as New Business Manager of Oceanic Time Warner Cable, where he directed strategic initiatives to drive growth in hotel sales and spearheaded comprehensive business development efforts statewide. Notably, James led the execution of the largest single sales contract for Hawaii in the company's history with Hilton Hotels and Vacation Clubs. James's many years of working in the hospitality industry, including managing

hotels and owning his own restaurants, have enabled him to work with the industry and other key industry stakeholders in the community toward economic growth and development in our State.

Since serving as Interim Director of DBEDT, James has embraced the Interim Director position by overseeing economic development in the State and confronting the economic challenges that were exacerbated by the August 8 Maui wildfires. It is James's ability to work with policymakers, leaders in the public and private sectors, nonprofit organizations, and communities and the fostering of collaborative working relationships over the years that have enabled him to help lead recovery efforts. His leadership and decades of experience and understanding of government continue to be essential in driving Maui wildfire response and recovery efforts and enhancing the economic well-being of our State.

I am confident that James Tokioka's commitment to the position, his leadership and collaborative skills, and vast experiences in the public and private sectors make him qualified and ready to carry out the duties of Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

Thank you for your consideration.



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**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
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**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**MARK B. GLICK**  
CHIEF ENERGY OFFICER

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Testimony of  
**MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer**

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

In Support of  
**GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 595, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**

**AS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM.**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee, I am writing in support of the appointment of Mr. James Kunane Tokioka to serve as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT). Mr. Tokioka's extensive professional experience, commitment to public service, and remarkable leadership skills make him an exemplary candidate for this critical position.

His commitment to public service is demonstrated by a decade-long tenure on the Kaua'i County Council and sixteen years in the Hawai'i State House of Representatives. I first came to know Mr. Tokioka during his time in the Legislature, when he was the Majority Whip, a dynamic leadership who consistently demonstrated a deep understanding of the diverse needs of Hawai'i's residents. He served in various other leadership roles, including Chair of the Legislative Management and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, Vice Chair of Tourism, and membership on influential committees such as Military and Veteran Affairs, Health and Human Services, Judiciary, and Hawaiian Affairs.

Mr. Tokioka's private sector experience is an important part of his strong qualifications to be DBEDT Director. As the New Business Manager at Oceanic Time Warner Cable, he directed strategic initiatives that resulted in substantial growth in hotel sales. During this time, he orchestrated Hilton Hotels and Vacation Clubs' largest single sales contract demonstrating his acumen at establishing key business partnerships.

He understands the vital role of entrepreneurs from his time as a restaurant owner. He was a partner at Terrace Restaurant at Kaua'i Lagoons and was the owner/operator of Da Box Lunch Place. Mr. Tokioka's hands-on experience in the hospitality sector uniquely positions him to understand the needs of our most significant business sector in Hawai'i.

Mr. Tokioka has already served with distinction as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, where he has showcased his ability to lead initiatives such as effort to build a new stadium and find temporary housing for those displaced by the devastating Lahaina wildfire.

Mr. Tokioka's long-standing involvement in various community organizations, including the Līhu'e Baseball League, Easter Seals Hawai'i, and the Visitor Aloha Society of Kaua'i, reflects his commitment to the well-being of Hawai'i's residents. His service on the Board of Directors for Easter Seals Hawai'i exemplify his dedication to community development and support for individuals with disabilities.

I have enjoyed working with Mr. Tokioka and offer my endorsement of Mr. Tokioka for the position of DBEDT Director. His proven track record, diverse skill set, and unwavering commitment to the people of Hawai'i make him an outstanding candidate for this vital role. I am confident that Mr. Tokioka will continue to be a visionary leader, driving positive change and contributing to the economic prosperity of the state. I urge you to confirm his nomination without hesitation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



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

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

**BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT DIVISION**

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
DIRECTOR

**DANE K. WICKER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**DENNIS T. LING**  
ADMINISTRATOR

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**Testimony of  
Dennis Ling, Administrator**  
Business Development & Support Division  
Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism  
before the  
**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism**  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229  
in consideration of  
**GM No. 595**  
**Confirmation of Director,**  
**Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism,**  
**Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**

It is a pleasure and an honor to submit this testimony in strong support of the nomination of Jimmy Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism.

I have known Jimmy personally and professionally for over 20 years when he was a representative from Kauai. He has always shown himself to be bright, energetic, enthusiastic, open-minded, and caring of the community. He brings with him a long-standing service and experience with the state, the private sector, and the community.

Economic development is so important to the State's continued vitality, growth, and prosperity. The Department needs to continually balance needs throughout the State to be strategic in planning initiatives and projects. What Jimmy brings to the Department is extremely valuable as the State formulates policies and strategies and implements major projects. He knows how to bring people together to get results and make positive things happen.

During the past months as Director of DBEDT he has shown solid leadership, collaboration, and decision-making skills, as evidenced by not only his work with the various divisions and agencies, but by his involvement in the Maui wildfire relief and response efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



JADE T. BUTAY  
DIRECTOR

WILLIAM G. KUNSTMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS  
KA 'OIHANA PONO LIMAHANA

February 6, 2024

To: The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair, and  
Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development,  
and Tourism

Date: Tuesday, February 6, 2024

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Place: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference, State Capitol

From: Jade T. Butay, Director  
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DLIR)

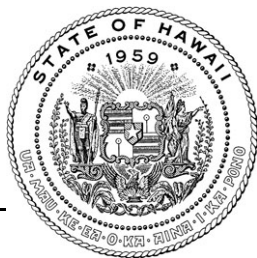
**Re: GM 595; Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.**

The Department of Labor and Industrial Relations **strongly supports** the confirmation of James Tokioka as Director to the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka earned his own certification in Political Science on the job for 26 years as an elected Kauai official from 1996 to 2022 having served on the Kauai County Council and State Representative for District 15. His years as an elected official gives him respect for the constitutional balance of power between the branches of government. He understands business, economic development and tourism having worked in the hotel, food and beverage industry since 1979 and as a dedicated public servant since 1996. He also executed the largest Oceanic Time Warner sales contract for the company by cultivating partnerships with Hawaii's hoteliers which brought substantial growth and hotel sales.

His knowledge, experience, and ability to build relationships will facilitate the work that lies ahead in promoting economic development, innovation, and sustainable tourism in Hawaii. We believe Mr. Tokioka to be an effective leader, communicator and coordinator who is determined to enhance Hawaii's economic prosperity through innovation, diversification and global competitiveness while preserving our quality of life.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 595.



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

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

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
DIRECTOR

**DANE K. WICKER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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**Statement of  
DAVID SIKKINK, Administrator  
Foreign-Trade Zone Division**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

**Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00 PM**  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of  
**Governor's Message 595**

The consideration and confirmation as Director, for the Department of Business,  
Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee,  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA,**  
for the term to expire December 31, 2026.

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

I submit this testimony in strong **SUPPORT** for GM595, the confirmation and appointment of **JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA** to serve as the Director of the Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

DBEDT is the state's most diverse department, requiring a significant understanding of business, housing, technology, finance, energy, international trade, economics, tourism, and public policy. It also requires a director who possesses the ability to effectively coordinate each of these areas to ensure the department's economic drivers work in collaboration and are focused to produce a growing, sustainable state economy.

With over 26 years in public service at the county and state levels, and his 24 years in the private sector in the hotel industry and as an entrepreneur, Mr. Tokioka has gained a unique understanding of economic issues facing local business and families throughout the state. He understands the economic and policy challenges confronting businesses, and as director of the department tasked to strengthen and grow the state's economy, he will effectively carry out the department's mission.



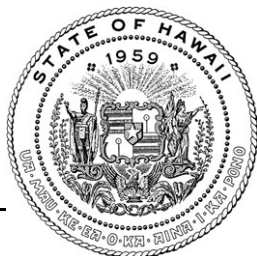


Mr. Tokioka has shown not only his considerable experience fostering economic growth but also possesses the unique leadership ability to move an initiative forward with conviction and compassion. This is no better exemplified than his critical work as the Governor appointee to co-lead the Joint Housing Task Force to help relocate over 5,000 individuals impacted by the Maui Wildfires, as well as his continuing work as Co-chair of the Maui Economic Recovery Commission.

I have truly enjoyed working with Mr. Tokioka over these past several months. His leadership skills, his aptitude in understanding the challenges facing Hawaii's businesses, and the experience he brings to the task of navigating the complexities of the state's economic challenges, make him an exceptional candidate for this position.

The Foreign-Trade Zone Division is respectfully requesting your confirmation and appointment of **JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA** to serve as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.



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

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
DIRECTOR

**DANE K. WICKER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Testimony of  
**Eugene Tian**

To the  
**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism**

February 6, 2024, 2:00pm  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of  
**GM 595**  
**Confirmation of Director,**  
**Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism**  
**Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**

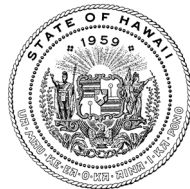
Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee.

I am Eugene Tian, Economic Research Administrator with the Research and Economic Analysis Division of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). I am pleased to submit this testimony in strong support of the nomination of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of our department.

During the past nine months working with James, I have found him to be a leader with vision, vast knowledge of economic development, and skillful in management and operations. His ceaseless and untiring efforts to help the victims of the Maui wildfires showed his dedication, responsiveness, and ability to take meaningful and decisive actions to meet challenges. His instructions to the management team are always clear and concise, with the goal of maximizing DBEDT's effectiveness and impact. In running and overseeing the department, I have found that he treats people with respect, compassion, and fairness.

I am happy to have James as the director of DBEDT. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



LUIS P. SALAVERIA  
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE  
*Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā*  
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ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE  
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA  
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE

TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM  
ON  
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 595

**Tuesday, February 6, 2024**  
**2:00 p.m.**  
**Conference Room 229 and Videoconference**

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR,  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM,  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE  
12-31-2026.

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

I strongly support the appointment of James Kunane Tokioka to the position of Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT). I am working with James Kunane Tokioka in my professional capacity as Director of Finance.

Governor Green's administration shares his priorities of homelessness and housing, the cost of living, climate change, and health care for the people of Hawai'i. We are committed to take action to make the needed changes to move Hawai'i forward.

Mr. James Kunane Tokioka is an integral part of a team that is dedicated to achieving the goals of this administration in an honest, transparent, accountable, and responsive manner.

Mr. James Kunane Tokioka has been serving as Director at DBEDT since May 2023 and prior to that as Deputy Director of the Airports Division. He was elected State Representative in November 2006 and served for 16 years until December 2022. His work experience will benefit the department and the State; therefore, I support his confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Statement of  
**CHUNG I. CHANG**  
**Strategic Broadband Coordinator**  
Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room #229

In consideration of  
**GM595**  
**Consideration and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of  
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee. On behalf of the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office, I am in **strong support** of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Tokioka since I began my role in July 2023. He has shown interest in the functions of various divisions and attached agencies and strives to align them to their missions and to meet the expectations of the legislature.

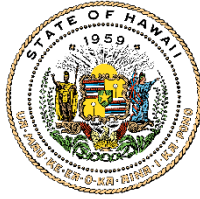
His experience in public offices as a Councilmember and as a Representative and in various roles in the private sector provide good foundation and relevant connections to lead a department with one of the most diversely assembled attached agencies with varying missions. We look forward to his continued leadership and support.

I ask for your favorable decision on Mr. Tokioka's advice and consent.

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

RYAN K.P. KANAKA'OLE  
FIRST DEPUTY

DEAN D. UYENO  
ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

AQUATIC RESOURCES  
BOATING AND OCEAN RECREATION  
BUREAU OF CONVEYANCES  
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE  
MANAGEMENT  
CONSERVATION AND COASTAL LANDS  
CONSERVATION AND RESOURCES  
ENFORCEMENT  
ENGINEERING  
FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
KAHOOLAWE ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION  
LAND  
STATE PARKS

Testimony of  
DAWN N.S. CHANG  
Chairperson

Before the Senate Committee on  
ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00 PM

State Capitol Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

In Consideration of  
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 595  
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION  
AS THE DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12-31-2026

Governor's Message 595 submits for consideration as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) for a term to expire on December 31, 2026. **The Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR) is in strong support of this nomination.**

Mr. Tokioka brings a strong background in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry and in State Government. This background will help him lead a department that will need to foster economic growth and stability for local residents while navigating strong support of sustainable tourism. Tokioka has been working with the Hawai'i Tourism Authority and the Legislature to help the agency move forward both with developing a clear path forward and getting the funding to follow that path. Less visible, but no less important agencies within DBEDT are the Hawai'i Housing Finance and Development Corporation, and the Office of Planning and Sustainable Development.

Mr. Tokioka's strong relationships in the community, particularly his Kaua'i community, and with his legislative colleagues come at a critical time for both the DBEDT and the State. The Lahaina Wildfires forced us to pivot from other concerns to the rebuilding of Lahaina. In doing so, the divide between locals and non-locals has come to the forefront, particularly in response to the housing crisis. Mr. Tokioka has been a co-lead in the Joint Housing Task Force to relocate more than 5,000 survivors from shelters to hotels and vacation rentals within thirteen (13) days of the wildfire. He is currently co-chairing the Maui Economic Recovery Commission tasked with providing guidance that will support local recovery priorities that align with the community's vision. Mr. Tokioka is committed to

this work and to ensuring the Hawai'i community is served by the State. As a legislator, Representative Tokioka would always bring legislation back to how it would serve the people who shopped at his local Long's. His concern for the individual, while still being able to see the big picture will help him to guide a critical department to meet its goals for thriving economic development for all residents of this state.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of the Governor's nominee for Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, James Kunane Tokioka.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
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JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

NADINE Y. ANDO  
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

DEAN I HAZAMA  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

**Testimony of  
NADINE Y. ANDO  
Director for the  
Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism  
Tuesday February 6, 2024  
2:00 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 595 RELATING TO  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
DIRECTOR DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND  
TOURISM**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the committee:

My name is Nadine Ando and I am the Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and I strongly support the confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka to the position of Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka's extensive experience and commitment to public service make him an excellent choice for this position. His impressive background in public service, including a decade on the Kaua'i County Council and 16 years in the Hawai'i State House of Representatives, demonstrates his deep understanding of governmental operations. Additionally, his diverse 24-year experience in the hospitality industry and

successful tenure at Oceanic Time Warner Cable/Spectrum highlight his valuable skill set in driving economic initiatives.

Since his nomination, Mr. Tokioka has shown exceptional leadership, particularly in the Maui wildfire response and recovery efforts. His co-leadership in the Joint Housing Task Force and oversight of the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program showcase his dedication to community well-being.

His commitment to collaborative efforts with community members and government agencies at all levels, as well as private organizations, is evident in his approach to addressing challenges like the Maui wildfires. Looking forward, his strategic vision for economic development and support for local businesses align with opportunities in this legislative session and with the State's administration.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT GOVERNOR



## Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority

An Agency of the State of Hawaii

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
CHAIR

**GWEN S YAMAMOTO LAU**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Testimony of  
**Gwen Yamamoto Lau**  
Executive Director  
**Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority**  
before the  
**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism**  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229  
in consideration of  
**GM No. 595**  
**Confirmation of Director, Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism,**  
**Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**

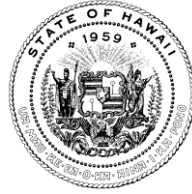
Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and Members of the Energy, Economic Development and Tourism Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in **support** of Governor's Message 595, for Gubernatorial Nominee James ("Jimmy") Kunane Tokioka, as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT).

With almost three decades of public service, first as a Kauai County Councilmember, then as a Representative, Jimmy has long-standing and effective relationships with policymakers, constituents and stakeholders. Rounding out his experience and expertise in lawmaking, Jimmy brings invaluable perspectives, experience and insights as a small business owner and hotelier to DBEDT.

By statute, the Director of DBEDT serves as Chair for the Hawaii Green Infrastructure Authority's ("Authority") five-member board. With Hawaii's ratepayers paying the highest electric utility rates in the nation, coupled with the current restrictive credit and high interest rate environment making it increasingly more difficult for commercial property owners, small businesses and nonprofits to access capital at reasonable rates and terms, the Authority looks forward to Jimmy's strategic leadership, technical expertise and support to lower the energy burden for Hawaii's underserved ratepayers and increase access to capital for small businesses, while delivering tangible economic development and environmental impacts, including jobs created/retained, state tax revenues generated and economic multiplier impacts.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and offer support and comments for Governor's Message 595.



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

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I**  
**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS**  
**KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA**  
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310  
P.O. BOX 541  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809  
Phone Number: (808) 586-2850  
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cca.hawaii.gov

**NADINE Y. ANDO**  
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

**DEAN I HAZAMA**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

**Testimony of**  
**DEAN I HAZAMA**  
**Deputy Director for the**  
**Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs**

**Before the**  
**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism**  
**Tuesday February 6, 2024**  
**2:00 PM**  
**Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 595 RELATING TO**  
**GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
**DIRECTOR DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND**  
**TOURISM**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the committee:

I strongly support the confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka to the position of Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

In his short time as interim Director of DBEDT, he has assisted over 5,000 Maui wildfire survivors find emergency shelter in hotels and vacation rental units in 13 days. Mr. Tokioka continues to lead recovery efforts to transition survivors from hotels into temporary housing and working with the community in aligning recovery efforts moving forward.

He is very knowledgeable and exhibits a positive, collaborative leadership style on working several issues of concern with our department. His past experience and

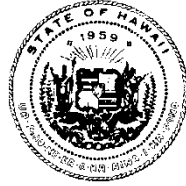
background serving in the State Legislature, hospitality industry and with Spectrum/Oceanic Time Warner Cable will be a great asset to the people of Hawaii.

Mr. Tokioka has always demonstrated his willingness to help those in need, is unafraid to tackle the tough issues and most importantly, is the best person for this job.

As Governor Green's administration is committed to addressing the many issues facing our State in a direct and forthright manner, he will be an integral part of the team to achieve the goals of this administration in an honest, transparent, accountable, and responsive manner.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



HAKIM OUANSAFI  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

BARBARA E. ARASHIRO  
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
HAWAII PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY  
1002 NORTH SCHOOL STREET  
POST OFFICE BOX 17907  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96817

IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO:

Statement of  
**Hakim Ouansafi, Executive Director**  
**Hawaii Public Housing Authority**

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

**Tuesday, February 6, 2024**  
**2:00 PM**  
**Room 229, Hawaii State Capitol**

In consideration of  
**GM 595**

**SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12-31-2026.**

Honorable Chair DeCoite, and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of GM 595, to consider and confirm James Kunane Tokioka to the position of Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

I have known James for many years, and I am honored to be working alongside with him in Governor Green's Administration. He is an integral part of a team that is committed to addressing the many issues facing our State and I believe that he will be able to effectively fulfill his role through his life experiences and professional expertise.

There is no doubt in my mind that he will continue to bring a fresh perspective on how to deliver services, improve the experience of those we serve, and strive to maximize taxpayer dollars efficiently and effectively.

The HPHA urges the Committee to pass GM 595 and confirm James Kunane Tokioka to the position of Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**WENDY L. GADY**  
Executive Director

STATE OF HAWAII  
**AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

235 S. Beretania Street, Room 205  
Honolulu, HI 96813  
Phone: (808) 586-0186 Fax: (808) 586-0189

TESTIMONY OF WENDY L. GADY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
AGRIBUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
AND TOURISM

Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

**GM595 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director,  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, Gubernatorial  
Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of GM595, relating to the consideration and confirmation of Mr. James Kunane Tokioka's appointment as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

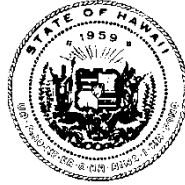
I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my support for Mr. Tokioka as DBEDT Director. During the past few months, Mr. Tokioka has promoted collaboration amongst DBEDT's sister agencies and encouraged the same cooperative spirit with external resources. In the wake of the Maui disaster, he demonstrated his unwavering commitment and dedication by spearheading the state's efforts to mobilize resources and volunteers. On Kauai, where the bulk of ADC's land holdings are located, he is well known and respected in the community that he previously served as a member of the Hawaii State House of Representatives.

Mr. Tokioka and his team have shown they have the leadership skills to work collaboratively with the numerous attached agencies and core programs that make up DBEDT. I look forward to working together with Mr. Tokioka and respectfully ask the committee to recommend his confirmation as DBEDT Director.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR



**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## **STATE OF HAWAII**

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM  
HAWAII HOUSING FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
677 QUEEN STREET, SUITE 300  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
FAX: (808) 587-0600

Statement of  
**DEAN MINAKAMI**  
Hawaii Housing Finance and Development Corporation  
Before the

### **SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

February 6, 2024 at time 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Room 229

In consideration of  
**GM 595**

**Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.**

HHFDC **supports** the consideration and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director for the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka is a community leader with a longstanding career in public service, beginning in 1996, when he was elected to the Kauai County Council, where he served for 10 years. From his election in 2006 until last January, he represented the 15<sup>th</sup> District in the Hawaii House of Representatives.

Named DBEDT Director during the interim prior to the current legislative session, Mr. Tokioka has proven himself to be an effective leader, encouraging collaboration across the Department's agencies and providing clear vision and direction for the Department. Mr. Tokioka conducts himself with a high level of integrity, is a problem-solver, and is an excellent communicator—all traits that are essential to be the DBEDT Director.

We believe Mr. Tokioka's past experience and his leadership of DBEDT to date demonstrates that he is well qualified to serve permanently as the Department's Director.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for GM 595.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**MORRIS M. ATTA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

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

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024  
2:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 229 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**GOVERNORS MESSAGE NO. 595**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, **JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Gubernatorial Nominee, James Kunane Tokioka as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). James demonstrated his leadership early, just three months into the Director position, when he was tasked to find shelter for families displaced by the Maui wildfire disaster, which he accomplished by reaching out to the tourism industries for assistance.

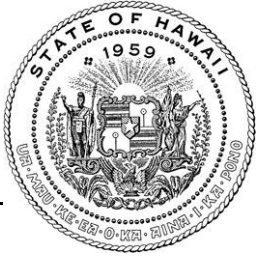
James Tokioka has been serving the people of Hawaii for over 25 years, as a member of the Kauai County Council, Hawaii State House of Representatives, the State Department of Transportation and as the appointed Director of DBEDT.

Respectfully requesting your vote to confirm his nomination to serve as the Director of DBEDT. He is qualified, well-respected and the right person for the position.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.







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

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
DIRECTOR

**DANE K. WICKER**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804  
Web site: [dbedt.hawaii.gov](http://dbedt.hawaii.gov)

Telephone: (808) 586-2355  
Fax: (808) 586-2377

Statement of  
**GEORJA SKINNER**  
**Chief Officer**  
Creative Industries Division of the  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism

before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

February 6, 2024  
2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room #229

In support of  
**GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 595, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
AS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM.**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Committee. I am writing to express my strong support for the appointment of James "Jimmy" Kunane Tokioka to serve as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) for the State of Hawai'i.

I have had the pleasure of working with "Jimmy" Tokioka when he served in the Legislature on measures that advanced our creative and film sectors. His roles while he served as the Representative from Kaua'i brought an important neighbor island perspective to his work.

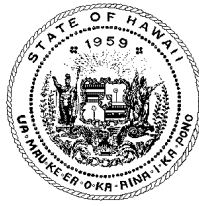
He is driven by his passion for community in all he approaches. As a leader for our department since assuming the position of Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) last May, he has proven he has the skills, balanced approach, and commitment to a better economic future for our state.

As a Kaua'i native who was instrumental in the Iniki disaster and recovery efforts, his skills were critical then as they are now. Last August, working alongside Governor Green, FEMA and County of Maui, his role during the emergency and aftermath of the Lahaina wildfires showcased his experience, leadership, and decisive action as part of the executive branch team.

For these reasons, I wholeheartedly endorse James "Jimmy" Kunane Tokioka's Gubernatorial appointment as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. His hands-on leadership, and care for these islands and our residents make him the ideal candidate for this important leadership role to transform our economic diversification landscape.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

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



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
AND REHABILITATION**  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalua Kalaima  
a Ho'oponopono Ola*  
1177 Alakea Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**TOMMY JOHNSON**  
DIRECTOR

**Melanie Martin**  
Deputy Director  
Administration

**Vacant**  
Deputy Director  
Correctional Institutions

**Sanna Muñoz**  
Deputy Director  
Rehabilitation Services  
and  
Programs

No. \_\_\_\_\_

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR MESSAGE NO. 595  
RELATING TO THE NOMINATION OF JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
TO BE THE DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

By  
Tommy Johnson, Director

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 6, 2024; 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Via Video Conference

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

I submit testimony in support of the nomination and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT). Mr. Tokioka has a diverse work background in both the private and government sectors.

Mr. Tokioka's decades of work experience in County and State Government, and in the private sector, make him the ideal candidate to lead DBEDT into the future. He clearly possesses the prerequisite knowledge, honed leadership and managerial skills, and interpersonal skills required for such a complex and far-reaching position.

I strongly urge the committee to recommend advice and consent for this highly qualified nominee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Governor's Message No. 595 and Mr. Tokioka.



Hawaii Technology Development Corporation  
521 Ala Moana Blvd, Ste 255 | 808-539-3806  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813 | www.htdc.org

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR

Written Statement of  
**Wayne Inouye**  
**Interim Director**  
Hawaii Technology Development Corporation  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

Tuesday, February 06, 2024  
2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room #229

In consideration of  
**GM595**  
**RELATING TO JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA.**

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

The Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) strongly supports GM595 submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

Director James Kunane Tokioka, with a rich history of public service, has shown unwavering dedication to Hawaii. His leadership roles on the Kauai County Council and in the Hawaii State Legislature exemplify this commitment. His private sector experience has also presented strong qualifications to be the DBEDT Director. Notably, Director Tokioka possesses a deep understanding of entrepreneurship, technology, and innovation. During his tenure, HTDC has had the privilege of collaborating closely with Director Tokioka. His adeptness as the Director of DBEDT was evident, particularly in guiding us through the challenges posed by the Lahaina devastation.

HTDC proudly endorses Director Tokioka for another term. His ability to foster collaboration, drive positive economic change, and advance community development makes him an exceptional candidate for the DBEDT directorship.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



TESTIMONY OF DANIEL NĀHO'OPI'I  
INTERIM PRESIDENT & CEO, HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024 2:00 p.m.  
In consideration of  
**GM 595**  
**NOMINATION OF JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members,

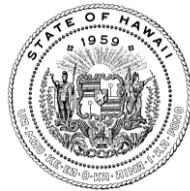
The Hawai'i Tourism Authority (HTA) appreciates the opportunity to offer our support for the nomination of experienced hospitality executive and veteran public servant James Kunane Tokioka to lead the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

With over two decades of experience in the hospitality industry preceding nearly a quarter century in public service, Mr. Tokioka is uniquely qualified to serve in the role of DBEDT Director overseeing the state's economic development activities and entities, including the Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

Our experience with Mr. Tokioka has shown him to be a strong leader who is fair and cool under pressure. Perhaps the most consequential example of these qualities is Mr. Tokioka's exemplary leadership in the immediate response and longer term economic recovery efforts in the wake of the 2023 Maui wildfires.

The Hawai'i Tourism Authority has valued a productive working relationship with Mr. Tokioka. We support this next step in his honorable career of public service, and appreciate this opportunity to express that support before this committee.

Mahalo.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

LUIS P. SALAVERIA  
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**  
*Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā*  
P.O. BOX 150  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM  
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND  
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE  
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION  
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION  
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

**TESTIMONY BY SABRINA NASIR**  
**DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE**

**TO THE**  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**  
**ON**  
**GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 595**

**Tuesday, February 6, 2024**  
**2:00 p.m.**  
**Conference Room 229 and Videoconference**

**SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR,**  
**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM,**  
**GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE**  
**12-31-2026.**

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

It is my pleasure to offer testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of the confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka to serve as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

I have had the privilege to work with Mr. Tokioka over the past year, first when he was appointed as Deputy Director of the Airports Division, and more recently in his current leadership role as the nominee for DBEDT Director.

During this past year, I have observed considerable leadership qualities in Mr. Tokioka that I feel contribute greatly to the betterment of the state and the people of Hawai'i. The state's worst natural disaster occurred on August 8, 2023, which caused immense devastation and loss of life. Mr. Tokioka immediately acted as DBEDT director helping to navigate an unfolding situation with significant complexities. This included working with county, federal, and private agencies and providing direct relief to those impacted by the disaster. I was impressed by his ability to lead during crisis and work with a multitude of stakeholders to develop and achieve a common goal.

From my conversations with Mr. Tokioka, I see his passion for public service. His extensive experience in the Kaua'i County Council, and later as a member of the State of Hawai'i House of Representatives, demonstrate his deep commitment to representing and advocating for his community. As the DBEDT Director, he must lead and strategize on issues related to the entire state, including economic development and

diversification, the housing shortage, energy, and many other sectors. I find that his inclusive leadership style allows him to develop strategies and initiatives that are community-driven, innovative, and strike a delicate balance among different stakeholder needs.

His personality is one that is easy to work with, humble, and respectful. He rarely takes credit for any work he does and instead lifts those up around him. Rather than find issues or criticism, he gathers ideas and looks for solutions. I find these to be admirable leadership traits, ones that are needed in the State. I urge the committee to confirm Mr. Tokioka so that DBEDT can continue to make progress towards its goals related to the economy, agriculture, tourism, energy, and much more.

Thank you for considering my testimony.



**STATE OF HAWAI'I**  
**OFFICE OF HAWAIIAN AFFAIRS**  
737 IWILEI ROAD, SUITE 200  
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96817

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) offers its strong support of James Kunane Tokioka for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Director Tokioka's career is one of true public service. For nearly 30 years, he has served as an elected official representing the interests of his constituents as well as all of Hawai'i. This dedication is rooted in his ties to this 'āina. He is a Native Hawaiian leader born and bred of this land.

Director Tokioka has had almost 3 decades to understand the ways government impacts residents from the county to the state level and beyond. For 10 years, he served the County of Kaua'i as an at-large Councilmember. This experience was the perfect training ground for a distinguished career in the State House of Representatives. Director Tokioka's 16 years in the State Legislature was marked by various leadership roles that allowed him to truly influence change for Hawai'i.

During his career as a public servant, Director Tokioka has led with a steadfast, yet understated style. This surely allowed him the opportunity to bring together diverse voices to develop and pass impactful policy. Director Tokioka also stood ready to support Native Hawaiian rights and investments. He did so with the necessary aplomb and diplomacy. As a representative, Director Tokioka was a true partner for the Hawaiian people.

We would also be remiss not to mention how important it is for Native Hawaiians to serve our state in leadership positions like that of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. Our state government deserves a diverse group of leaders and must include team members who can ensure the perspective of these islands' first people are represented. Additionally, it is important for keiki to see other kānaka maoli in leadership positions. It helps them see a future for themselves here in Hawai'i. With more Native Hawaiians now living outside of our state than within, this is especially pressing. The Office of Hawaiian Affairs looks forward to working together with Director Tokioka and the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of Director Tokioka as this committee considers his confirmation.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ke Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina 'o  
Hawaii*

SYLVIA J. LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR  
STATE OF HAWAII  
*Ka Hope Kia'āina o ka Moku'āina  
'o Hawaii*



KALI WATSON  
CHAIRMAN, HHC  
*Ka Luna Ho'okele*

KATIE L. DUCATT  
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRMAN  
*Ka Hope Luna Ho'okele*

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS**

*Ka 'Oihana 'Āina Ho'opulapula Hawaii'i*

P. O. BOX 1879  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96805

TESTIMONY OF KALI WATSON, CHAIRMAN  
HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION  
BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
AND TOURISM  
HEARING ON FEBRUARY 6, 2024 AT 2:00PM IN CR 229

IN SUPPORT OF

**GM 595**

for consideration and confirmation to the  
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism,  
Gubernatorial Nominee, **JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**,  
for a term to expire 12-31-2026

February 6, 2024

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of James Tokioka to serve as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

DHHL is confident that Mr. Tokioka will be able to fulfill his duties as Director of DBEDT given his extensive experience in both public and private sectors. Mr. Tokioka's public service in the Hawaii State House of Representative and the Kaua'i County Council will also be beneficial to the State of Hawaii through his long-standing relationships and thorough understanding of state processes and needs. DHHL commends Mr. Tokioka for his instrumental role and hard work in connecting hotel facilities in service to victims of the August 2023 Lahaina wildfires with shelter and relief.

DHHL looks forward to continuing to work with Mr. Tokioka and we respectfully ask your committee to advise and consent to this nomination. Thank you for your consideration of our testimony.



P.O. Box 253, Kunia, Hawai'i 96759  
Phone: (808) 848-2074; Fax: (808) 848-1921  
e-mail [info@hfbf.org](mailto:info@hfbf.org); [www.hfbf.org](http://www.hfbf.org)

February 6, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

**TESTIMONY ON GM 595**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
2:00 PM

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

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

**The Hawai'i Farm Bureau strongly supports the confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.**

HFB has had the opportunity to work with Mr. Tokioka during his sixteen years while he served in the Hawai'i House of Representatives. We are confident that Mr. Tokioka is the right person for this position. We have found him to be exceptionally qualified, dedicated, honest, and fair in his handling of the many complicated issues tackled by the Legislature. Mr. Tokioka's experience in both the public and private sectors makes him an ideal candidate for the position of Director of DBEDT. He is personable, listens to and considers all points of view, and has excellent communication skills.

As a farmer-based organization, HFB appreciates Mr. Tokioka's support for agriculture and his commitment to addressing the many important agricultural issues facing Hawai'i's farming community. His experience is complemented by a strong work ethic and dedication that will undoubtedly combine to provide positive leadership for Hawai'i's Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

Please accept our strong support for Mr. James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.



*Cade Watanabe, Financial Secretary-Treasurer*

*Gemma G. Weinstein, President*

*Eric W. Gill, Senior Vice-President*

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Monday, February 5, 2024

Hawaii State Legislature  
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania St.

Re: GM 595 – Tokioka, J. (Director of DBEDT)

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice-Chair Wakai and members:

UNITE HERE Local 5 – a local labor organization representing more than 10,000 hotel, health care and food service workers throughout Hawaii would like to offer comments in support of GM 595 and the appointment of Mr. James Tokioka as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

As an organization, we have known Mr. Tokioka for many years now, and in that time have observed first-hand his steadfast commitment towards defending the public's interest. As a former state legislator, Airports Division Director and hospitality industry leader, we know that Mr. Tokioka brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Department. In fact, Mr. Tokioka has already proven himself to be a valuable leader to our State, his leadership in coordinating the State's response to housing displaced Maui wildfire victims is worth noting.

Our organization is confident that Mr. Tokioka, if confirmed, will continue to serve in our community's best interest and utilize his diverse set of experiences and subject matter expertise to help stabilize Hawaii's tourism industry in lieu of the many challenges we currently face.

Thank you for your consideration and we ask for your Committee's support of GM 595.

TESTIMONY OF DANE K. WICKER  
IN SUPPORT OF  
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 595, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA

FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM.

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism:

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for Mr. James Kunane Tokioka as the director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. Having observed Mr. Tokioka's distinguished career and significant contributions to public service, private sector, and disaster response and recovery efforts, I am confident in his ability to bring about positive change and make meaningful contributions to our community.

Throughout Mr. Tokioka's career, he has exhibited exemplary leadership in various capacities within public service at both the county and state levels. His diverse experience, ranging from constituent services to administration, demonstrates a well-rounded understanding of the complexities and challenges faced by our community. This background uniquely positions Mr. Tokioka to address the multifaceted issues that our state encounters.

In the private sector, Mr. Tokioka has demonstrated exceptional skills and commitment in the hospitality industry. From managing hotels to managing administrative agencies, his expertise was particularly evident during the Maui wildfire disaster. Mr. Tokioka developed, coordinated, and implemented a comprehensive plan to evacuate visitors and residents from the Lahaina area, showcasing his ability to think on his feet and provide effective solutions in high-pressure situations. Furthermore, his ongoing efforts to develop solutions for long-term economic recovery underscore his dedication to the well-being of our community.

Notably, Mr. Tokioka spent 12 years contributing to the success of Oceanic Time Warner Cable/Spectrum, overseeing new business management programs and playing a key role in securing the largest single contract for Hawai'i in the company's history. This experience reflects his strategic thinking and ability to navigate complex business environments.

Since his nomination as DBEDT director on May 5th, Mr. Tokioka has been deeply involved in the Maui wildfire response and recovery efforts. Co-leading the Joint Housing Task Force, overseeing the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program, and co-chairing the Maui Economic Recovery Commission are just a few examples of Mr. Tokioka's hands-on approach and commitment to fostering community well-being.

As Mr. Tokioka embarks on the journey of rebuilding Lahaina, his dedication to working collaboratively with government agencies at all levels, as well as private organizations, is commendable. The long-term process of rebuilding requires a leader with the foresight, resilience, and community-oriented approach that Mr. Tokioka brings to the table.

In this legislative session, I believe Mr. Tokioka is uniquely positioned to enhance the economic well-being of our islands. His focus on strategic investments that drive economic development and support local businesses aligns with the needs and aspirations of our community.

I wholeheartedly endorse Mr. Tokioka for director and believe that his leadership will contribute significantly to the betterment of our community.

February 6, 2024  
2:00 pm

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

Re: GM 595 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

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

My name is Clyde Hayashi and I work for the Hawaii Iron Workers Stabilization Fund. I **SUPPORT** the confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism,

Mr. Tokioka has valuable experiences in the private sector with years of work in the hospitality sector. He also worked 12 years at Oceanic Time Warner Cable.

Mr. Tokioka served ten years on the Kauai County Council, where he served in council leadership. He was active in the Hawaii State Association of Counties (HSAC) and the National Association of Counties, where he served on the national board. He was in a leadership role addressing county issues and policies. His county level experience is a tremendous asset.

Mr. Tokioka also served 16 years in the State House where he has overseen and addressed DBEDT programs, policies, concerns, planning, and budget. He has had the opportunity to look at hundreds of DBEDT-related bills which have come before the legislature and participate in many hearing where these bills have been discussed. His legislative experience is extremely valuable

His extensive experiences make him an ideal person to lead DBEDT.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Maria Lucia L. Pascual  
[marialuciapascual@gmail.com](mailto:marialuciapascual@gmail.com)

Testimony of  
**Maria Lucia L. Pascual**  
**Administrative Services Officer**  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism**

February 6, 2024  
State Capitol, Conference Room #229

In consideration of  
**GM No. 595**  
**Confirmation of Director,**  
**Department of Business and Economic Development and Tourism**  
**Gubernatorial Nominee, James Kunane Tokioka**

I am writing to express my strong support for GM No. 595 for Jimmy Tokioka's nomination to serve as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT).

Having been the Administrative Services Officer for DBEDT since January 13, 2023, I can say that Jimmy Tokioka is a passionate leader. He is truly clear about carrying out the Department's vision and mission. Mr. Tokioka effectively delegates tasks to managers and staff, identifying employees and their unique talents and skills. As a result, the duties delegated are done effectively by the managers and assigned staff. Furthermore, he brings a valuable element of camaraderie to the team, characterized by a sense of humor that may not immediately be apparent given his position at the Director level.

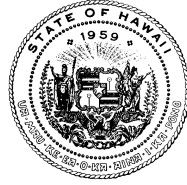
In closing, I strongly urge his confirmation as DBEDT Director for these and other reasons.

Please feel free to contact me directly should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Maria Lucia (Lucy) L. Pascual  
(signed)

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII  
KE KIA'AINA O KA MOKU'AINA 'O HAWAII



**KENNETH S. FINK, MD, MGA, MPH**  
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

**STATE OF HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
**KA 'OIHANA OLAKINO**  
P. O. BOX 3378  
HONOLULU, HI 96801-3378

In reply, please refer to:  
File:

Testimony of Kenneth S. Fink, Director of Health  
In SUPPORT of Governor's Message 595  
Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business,  
Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA,  
for a term to expire at noon on 12-31-2026.

SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, CHAIR  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Hearing Date: February 6, 2024                      Room Number: 229

I am writing in strong support of the nomination and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka to serve as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

I could tell you that James was a member of the Kauai County Council for 10 years; State Representative for District 15 for 16 years; and Deputy Director for the Hawaii State Department of Transportation Airports Division in January 2023 until being named as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) since May 5, 2023.

I'd rather tell you that since he began serving as the Governor's nominee for DBEDT Director, I have enjoyed getting to know Jimmy better. I have been extremely impressed by his ability to develop relationships, plan and execute projects, and his humility.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of James Kunane Tokioka to serve as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

## SENATE COMMITTEE WAYS AND MEANS

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

2:00PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229

**GM595** Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Office of Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and the members of this Committee.

I humbly submit my testimony in strong **support** for the appointment of James Kunane Tokioka to the position of Director of the Office of Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

I have known Mr. Tokioka for almost 2 decades, both when he served as a Kauai councilman and then in the Hawaii State House of Representatives. Mr. Tokioka has a distinguished career working with various communities and with tourism industry stakeholders. He is a dedicated public servant and has the knowledge, accountability, and responsiveness to be an outstanding leader for the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

During the recent Hawaii Wildfires disaster, I personally witnessed and was impressed by Acting Director Tokioka. He worked tirelessly with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), American Red Cross (ARC), State and County Disaster Management Agencies, Hawaii Tourism Authority and other stakeholders to meet the needs of the community. He coordinated the transition of impacted families from congregate shelters into hotels and transient vacation rentals (TVR) within the first 3-4 days of the disaster. His ability to work with industry leaders was extremely successful as seen with his ability to negotiate contracts with various stakeholders including but not limited to between Federal, State, County jurisdictions, non-governmental agencies, and community organizations.

Acting Director Tokioka has the knowledge and the communication skills to work with industry leaders under his purview. His love for his family, the State and Kauai Country is very evident in his desire to serve in the Green Administration.

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



Testimony of  
**Mary Alice Evans**  
Waimanalo, Hawaii

**GM 595**

Nomination of **James Kunane Tokioka** for  
Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**  
**Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 2:00 PM**  
**Conference Room 229**

Chair DeCoite. Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism.

Please **support** the nomination of **James Tokioka** to serve **as Director** of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Jimmy Tokioka has worked in the private sector and the public sector. He understands Hawaii's people and its economy and the challenges of increasing diversity in industry sectors.

When the Maui and Hawaii Island wildfires happened Jimmy took on the most difficult of emergency response areas: temporary housing for survivors who lost their homes. Working with an broad array of county, state and federal partners, the American Red Cross and the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement and Maui hotels, he was able to support a rapid relocation to temporary shelters in hotels and other locations. The complexity of this effort cannot be overstated. Working 12 hours a day, seven days a week for months, Jimmy was totally committed to finding housing for displaced Maui families.

In addition, Jimmy accepted Governor Green's request to serve as the State Lead for the Long Term Economic Recovery Function, part of the National Disaster Response Framework, and established the Maui Economic Recovery Commission with County co-chair Luana Mahi. The ERC has the support of more than 100 Maui residents and state leaders in economic development.

On a personal note, I have found Director Tokioka to be an excellent listener and a good communicator. He has guided and supported all of DBEDT's divisions and attached agencies and with Deputy Director Dane Wicker has moved quickly to fill critical positions that support all of DBEDT's programs.

I urge this Committee's **strong support** for the confirmation of Jimmy Tokioka as Director of DBEDT. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the nomination of James Tokioka.

**LATE**

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 6:21:27 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rachael Wong	Individual	Support	In Person

Comments:

Good afternoon, Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism:

I am writing in my individual capacity to submit testimony in **strong support** of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT). He brings heart, experience, and leadership to DBEDT and the state during a time when all are needed.

By way of context, Director Tokioka and I met nearly a decade ago when he served in the House of Representatives and I led the Department of Human Services (DHS). When he assumed the DBEDT position in May 2023, the Director spent time learning about the breadth and depth of the department's scope, its teams, and possible impact, especially when collaborating with local communities. He reached out to One Shared Future, my social impact business that had an existing contract with DBEDT, to support bringing together local business and economic development leaders and organizations to identify and prioritize needs and recommendations. After the August 8 wildfires, he quickly pivoted his focus to Maui and immediately mobilized DBEDT's agencies and resources to provide short-term housing for Maui residents and departing visitors. His decades-long, trusted relationships throughout the state, especially in the hotel and hospitality sector, were key to securing housing for displaced families and are one of the unseen elements that makes him effective as a leader.

One visible representation of Director Tokioka's leadership and action is the [Maui Economic Recovery Commission \(ERC\)](#), which he co-chairs with the County of Maui Office of Economic Development Director Luana Mahi. As Chair DeCoite is aware, the ERC is comprised of ~90 members—cultural practitioners, business owners, farmers, community individuals and leaders, union directors, bank, healthcare, education, and airline executives—who volunteer their time to develop ideas, recommendations, and projects for the County of Maui's economic recovery plan to the federal government. The vast majority of this diverse group lives and works on Maui or has team members and offices there. The Maui ERC is the local Economic Recovery Support Function (RSF) of the National Disaster Recovery Framework, and this cross-sector group is collectively creating a new way of doing business that is community-led, collaborative, and comes from people, place, and values.

It is through this work that the One Shared Future team and I have appreciated learning about Director Tokioka's leadership style: he values inclusion, kindness, aloha, and strategic action. He invites others' perspectives, easily pivots and adapts to best serve the community's economic

recovery and development needs and, after hearing from the whole room, makes decisions and takes action. The Director is clear that his goal is always what is best for Hawai'i (and, in this case, Maui), and it is never about an administration, agency, or individual. His values and vision ground the Maui ERC and what they will develop. Finally, his patience and calm lead to a positive working environment, even during times of duress. These are vital qualities for any organization, and DBEDT and the state will benefit from Director Tokioka's kind, community-based, action-oriented, and aloha-centered leadership.

It is for these reasons that I strongly encourage the Committee to recommend Director Tokioka for Senate confirmation.

Thank you,

Rachael Wong, DrPH



**HAWAII COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

547 Queen Street, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813  
Telephone: (808) 594-0300 Fax: (808) 587-0299  
Web site: <http://dbedt.hawaii.gov/hcda/>

JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR

CHASON ISHII  
CHAIRPERSON

CRAIG K. NAKAMOTO  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Statement of  
**CRAIG K. NAKAMOTO**  
**Executive Director**  
Hawaii Community Development Authority  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON**  
**ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

In consideration of  
**GM 595**  
**Consideration and Confirmation as the Director,**  
**Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism,**  
**Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA,**  
**for a term to expire 12-31-2026.**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee. The Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) **supports** GM 595, that considers the confirmation of **James Kunane Tokioka** as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT).

I have had the privilege to work with Mr. Tokioka as the Director of DBEDT and he brings with him a strong and vast background of experience having worked in different Government sectors within the State of Hawai'i; like at the Kaua'i County Council, the Hawai'i State House of Representatives, and the Department of Transportation. He was part of Governor Josh Green's response team in the aftermath of the wildfires that devastated the Lahaina community and we have seen, firsthand, how Mr. Tokioka quickly answers the call to assist where necessary throughout the State.

Economic development is vital to the State of Hawai'i's growth and resiliency, and he brings valuable insight and vision to help balance various needs throughout the Department.

I look forward to continued collaboration with Mr. Tokioka as the Director of the Department. Thank you for the opportunity to provide our comments.



**SanHi**

GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

A LIMITED LIABILITY LAW PARTNERSHIP

DATE: February 6, 2024

TO: Senator Lynn DeCoite  
Chair, Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

FROM: SanHi Government Strategies

RE: **GM 595 – Director, Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism**  
**Hearing Date: Tuesday, February 6, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.**  
**Conference Room: 229**

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Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice-Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism:

We are submitting this testimony in strong support of James Kunane Tokioka, gubernatorial nominee for Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

We have worked with Mr. Tokioka for many years in his position as a legislator. He has had a long and successful career in public service and in the private sector, and brings extensive knowledge and experience regarding the tourism industry in particular. These experiences will undoubtedly serve him well as the DBEDT director, especially as DBEDT tackles many business and economic challenges our State faces in the years ahead.

Mr. Tokioka has done excellent work in his role as interim DBEDT director already – including playing a leadership role on the Temporary Housing Task Force to connect those in urgent need of housing due to the Maui fires with Hawaii homeowners willing to assist.

We have also recently worked with Mr. Tokioka on issues involving economic and workforce development, and have found him to be fair, approachable, and proactive in connecting the business community with government.

We have full confidence that Mr. Tokioka will continue to be an effective, forward-thinking leader for DBEDT. For these reasons, we support the nomination of James Tokioka and ask the Committee to advise and consent to his nomination as DBEDT director.

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



JORDAN LOWE  
DIRECTOR

MICHAEL VINCENT  
Deputy Director  
Administration

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT GOVERNOR  
KE KE'ENA

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT**

*Ka 'Oihana Ho'okō Kānāwai*

715 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii'i 96813

JARED K. REDULLA  
Deputy Director  
Law Enforcement

No. **2024-0020**

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR MESSAGE NO. 595  
RELATING TO THE NOMINATION OF JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
TO BE THE DIRECTOR FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

By

Jordan Lowe, Director

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 6, 2024; 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 229 & Via Videoconference

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

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

I submit this testimony in support of the nomination and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka to be the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). Mr. Tokioka has decades of work experience in the private and public sector. His strong leadership skills as a Representative in Legislation has helped to pave the way for him to hold leadership roles in the Department of Transportation and now the Director for DBEDT.

Mr. Tokioka's vast experience in several fields of state and county agencies coupled with his experience in hotel management here and abroad, make him uniquely qualified to be the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 595 and Mr. James Kunane Tokioka.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR

**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
DBEDT DIRECTOR

**DANE K. WICKER**  
DBEDT DEPUTY DIRECTOR



**BRENNON T. MORIOKA**  
CHAIR, STADIUM AUTHORITY

**RYAN G. ANDREWS**  
STADIUM MANAGER

**CHRIS J. SADAYASU**  
DEPUTY STADIUM MANAGER

*An Agency of the State of Hawaii*

February 6, 2024

TESTIMONY  
OF  
**RYAN G. ANDREWS, STADIUM MANAGER**  
STADIUM AUTHORITY  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM  
before the

**SENATE COMMITTEE**  
**ON**  
**ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

February 6, 2024, 2:00 P.M.  
Conference Room 229

In consideration of  
**G.M. 595**  
**SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR,**  
**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM,**  
**GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA,**  
**FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12-31-2026**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in strong support of the confirmation of Mr. James Kunane Tokioka to the position of Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). From my professional interactions with Mr. Tokioka, it is clear he has the knowledge, experience, and acumen to excel in this important role. Mr. Tokioka brings valuable and extensive experience and knowledge at various levels of government, including a decade on the Kauai County Council, sixteen years as a State Representative, and valuable time working in the private sector. This collective experience is extremely beneficial to DBEDT as it continues

the complex and challenging goals of business growth, job creation and sustainable economic development. His unique blend of public and private sector experience equips him with a broad perspective on the economic landscape, allowing him to be innovative and effective at developing successful strategies to move the needle for the State of Hawaii.

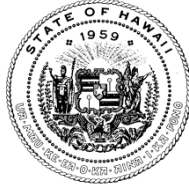
Beyond his professional qualifications, I have had the privilege of interacting with Mr. Tokioka on a personal level and have consistently found him to be exceptionally kind, patient, approachable and quick to learn. These qualities are not only important for a public servant but highlight his commitment to understand the myriad of complex projects that involve DBEDT.

In conclusion, I respectfully ask for the Committee's favorable consideration in confirming gubernatorial nominee, Mr. James Kunane Tokioka to the position of Director, DBEDT for a term to expire on December 31, 2026.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of Mr. Tokioka.



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



EDWIN H. SNIFFEN  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

Deputy Directors  
Nā Hope Luna Ho'okele  
DREANALEE K. KALILI  
TAMMY L. LEE  
ROBIN K. SHISHIDO

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION | KA 'OIHANA ALAKAU  
869 PUNCHBOWL STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-5097

Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00 P.M.  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
State Capitol

In consideration of  
**Governor's Message 595**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business,  
Economic Development & Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, James K. Tokioka

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

The Department of Transportation (DOT) supports the confirmation of James K. Tokioka as the Director for the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka's extensive experience in public service, combined with his deep understanding of our state's unique economic landscape, make him an ideal candidate for this vital position.

Mr. Tokioka's dedication to public service extends over many years. His previous roles as a member of the Kaua'i County Council and the Hawai'i State House of Representatives demonstrate his commitment to representing the needs of his constituents and working collaboratively to find solutions. He has a proven track record of understanding the challenges and opportunities facing different sectors of our economy, from tourism and agriculture to small businesses and innovation.

Mr. Tokioka possesses the experience, dedication, and leadership qualities necessary to effectively lead the DBEDT. His proven track record of public service, his deep understanding of our state's economic landscape, and his commitment to collaboration make him an ideal choice for this important position.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



# LAND USE COMMISSION

*Komikina Ho'ohana 'Āina*

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omōhala Pā'oihana, 'Imi Wai wai a Ho'omāka'ika'i*

**JOSH GREEN, MD**  
GOVERNOR

**DANIEL E. ORODENKER**  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

235 S. Beretania Street, RM 406, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813  
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96804  
Email Address: dbedt.luc.web@hawaii.gov

Telephone: (808) 587-3822  
Fax: (808) 587-3827  
Website: luc.hawaii.gov

February 6, 2024

Statement of  
**Daniel E. Orodener**  
**Executive Officer**  
State Land Use Commission

Before the  
**Senate Committee on**  
**Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism**

Tuesday February 6, 2024  
2:00 PM  
State Capitol, Room 229 & Video Conference

In consideration of  
**GM 595**  
**FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION**  
**GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
**As Director of Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism**

Chair DeCoite; Vice Chair Wakai; and members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism:

Please accept this testimony in strong support for the confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka as director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. I've had the pleasure of working with Mr. Tokioka since he began his assignment at DBEDT. He has shown himself to be capable, supportive of the department's programs and dedicated to efficiency and obtaining readouts.

Mr. Tokioka is worthy a candidate for this position. He has the background and experience necessary to be a successful director at the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 02/06/2024

**Time:** 02:00 PM

**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Energy, Economic  
Development, and Tourism

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Title of Bill:** GM 0595 Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

**Purpose of Bill:**

**Department's Position:**

I am writing to express my strong support for James Tokioka's nomination to serve as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). As the Superintendent of Education, I have witnessed Mr. Tokioka's commitment to public service and his significant contributions to our community.

With a notable career spanning private and public sector roles on the Kauai County Council, the Hawai'i State House of Representatives, and leadership positions in the hospitality industry and corporate sector, Mr. Tokioka brings a wealth of experience and a deep understanding of our state's challenges.

His recent involvement in the Maui wildfire response and recovery efforts, including co-leading the Joint Housing Task Force and overseeing the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program, demonstrates his effective leadership in crisis management.

I look forward to working with Mr. Tokioka to foster partnerships and initiatives that will contribute to the continued success and growth of our school-to-work pipeline. Together, I believe we can implement strategic initiatives that not only strengthen the educational foundation of our students but also provide them with valuable skills and opportunities for a seamless transition into the workforce.

I endorse James Tokioka for the position of DBEDT Director, and I am confident that his proven leadership, dedication, and strategic vision will positively impact our community.

**JOSH GREEN**  
GOVERNOR  
KE KIA'ĀINA



**KENNETH S. HARA**  
MAJOR GENERAL  
ADJUTANT GENERAL  
KA 'AKUKANA KENELALA

**STEPHEN F. LOGAN**  
BRIGADIER GENERAL  
DEPUTY ADJUTANT GENERAL  
KA HOPE 'AKUKANA KENELALA

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA**  
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL  
3949 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96816-4495

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 595,  
RELATING TO GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE JAMES TOKIOKA

PRESENTATION TO  
THE SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

BY

MAJOR GENERAL KENNETH S. HARA  
ADJUTANT GENERAL  
AND DIRECTOR OF HAWAII EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 2, 2024

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism.

I am Major General Kenneth Hara, Adjutant General and Director of Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, Department of Defense, State of Hawaii.

I respectfully submit testimony in **SUPPORT of GM595**, relating to the Gubernatorial Nomination of Mr. James Tokioka as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development (DEBDT).

As a fellow cabinet member throughout the Maui fires, Mr. Tokioka has demonstrated leadership and partnership in working with local communities and helping the Lahaina wildfire survivors and businesses of West Maui. He has been a reliable teammate and I believe he will continue to serve the people of Hawaii with integrity and thoughtfulness.

Mr. Tokioka's accomplishments as a public servant complement his extensive experience in both State and County government as a civil servant, legislator, and senior leader. He possesses a decade's worth of knowledge in the private sector with sales and negotiations, and his expertise in both the public and private sectors will prove invaluable in leading and navigating DEBDT through this tough economic period.

I would be honored to continue to serve with Mr. Tokioka. His track record and results at the most senior levels speak for themselves and I am confident he will be a pillar to help guide and lead our state into the future.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify and for your consideration.

MG Kenneth S. Hara: [kenneth.s.hara@hawaii.gov](mailto:kenneth.s.hara@hawaii.gov); 808-672-1001.

JOSH GREEN M.D.  
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR



GARY S. SUGANUMA  
DIRECTOR

KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION**  
Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau  
P.O. BOX 259  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809  
PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540  
FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

**TESTIMONY OF  
GARY S. SUGANUMA, DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

**TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

In consideration of G.M. No. 595

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, gubernatorial nominee, James Tokioka

**BEFORE THE:**

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.  
**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 229

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

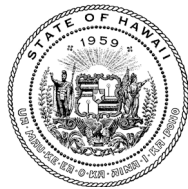
Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of the confirmation of Mr. James Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka's experience as a county and state lawmaker, his many years of experience in the hospitality industry, his experience as a business owner, and the fact that he is already doing a great job as the interim director of DBEDT, makes him an excellent candidate for Director of DBEDT. It has been a pleasure working alongside Mr. Tokioka over the past year and I have no doubt that he is committed and able to be an effective leader for DBEDT.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 595.

**JOSH GREEN M.D.**  
GOVERNOR

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
LT. GOVERNOR



**GARY S. SUGANUMA**  
DIRECTOR

**KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF TAXATION**

Ka 'Oihana 'Auhau  
P.O. BOX 259

HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809  
PHONE NO: (808) 587-1540  
FAX NO: (808) 587-1560

**TESTIMONY OF  
KRISTEN M.R. SAKAMOTO, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF TAXATION**

**TESTIMONY ON THE FOLLOWING MEASURE:**

G.M. 595, Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026

**BEFORE THE:**

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 6, 2024

**TIME:** 2:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** State Capitol, Room 229

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the confirmation of James Tokioka as Director for the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka's many years in public service, including his time spent in the State House of Representatives, Kauai County Council, and State executive branch, reflect his commitment to the State, and provide him with invaluable knowledge and experience in government. Additionally, since Mr. Tokioka's appointment as Director of DBEDT, he has taken on an important role in the Maui wildfire response and recovery, including roles with the Joint Housing Task Force, Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program, and Maui Economic Recovery Commission. He has exhibited leadership and dedication in these roles.

Based on the foregoing, I urge the Committee to confirm Mr. Tokioka's appointment. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 595.



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



**KENNETH S. HARA**  
DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT

**JAMES DS. BARROS**  
ADMINISTRATOR OF  
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**  
**KA 'OIHANA PILI KAUA**  
**HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**  
4204 DIAMOND HEAD ROAD  
HONOLULU, HAWAI'I 96816-4420

STATE OF HAWAI'I  
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 595

BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
**ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

BY

JAMES DS. BARROS  
ADMINISTRATOR  
HAWAI'I EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

FEBRUARY 6, 2024

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice-Chair Wakai, and Member of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony to **SUPPORT** GM595.

The Hawai'i Emergency Management Agency proudly expresses its **SUPPORT** for Governor's Message 595, which nominates James Kunane Tokioka as the new Director for the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Tokioka has consistently displayed exceptional leadership abilities and has effectively coordinated assistance for survivors of the Maui wildfires. Notably, he has efficiently handled various operational matters including:

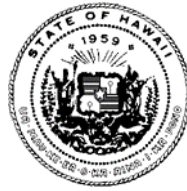
- Operationalizing transitional sheltering assistance for Maui wildfire survivors by leveraging hotel and lodging assets.
- Instituting and establishing emergency operations and intake center at the Hawai'i Convention Center and later at the Veteran's Memorial of the Pacific.
- Acting as key liaison between foreign embassies and agencies, ensuring that constituents affected by the wildfires received the necessary assistance and support.
- Serving as the lead coordinator for hospitality and tourism in West Maui areas.
- Actively acting as the point of contact for federal, state, and county informational resources, providing valuable guidance and support before, during, and after the wildfire events. Additionally, Mr. Tokioka continues to assist with short-term lodging in the NCS, housing efforts, and overall economic recovery for tourism and businesses in Maui.

HI-EMA supports this nomination and firmly believes the Mr. Tokioka's expertise and dedication will greatly contribute to the continued growth and success of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on GM595.

James Barros: [james.barros@hawaii.gov](mailto:james.barros@hawaii.gov); 808-733-4300

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



CATHY BETTS  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

JOSEPH CAMPOS II  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

TRISTA SPEER  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII  
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAI'I  
**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES**  
KA 'OIHANA MĀLAMA LAWELAWE KANAKA  
Office of the Director  
P. O. Box 339  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96809-0339

February 5, 2024

TO: The Honorable Senator Lynn Decoite, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

FROM: Cathy Betts, Director

SUBJECT: **Testimony in Strong Support**  
**G.M. 595, Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director,**  
**Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism, Gubernatorial**  
**Nominee, James Tokioka**

Hearing: February 6, 2024, 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of James "Jimmy" Tokioka for the position of Director for Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT). I have worked with Mr. Tokioka in various capacities for over a decade, and know Jimmy to be knowledgeable, supportive, and collaborative. Jimmy worked on difficult issues as a former legislator and I could count on Jimmy to be always trustworthy and kind.

My team at the Department of Human Services (DHS) has worked closely with Jimmy on housing solutions for Maui. After the tragic wildfires on August 8 of last year, Jimmy mobilized his team to ensure creative, innovative, and collaborative solutions could be offered to the survivors. He is hard working and ethical. I believe he is highly qualified to be confirmed as the Director, and I strongly support his confirmation.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

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



KEITH A. REGAN  
COMPTROLLER  
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ  
  
MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN  
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWE LAULĀ**  
P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BY  
MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES  
TO THE  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM  
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 595  
February 6, 2024  
2:00 p.m.  
Room 229 & Videoconference

SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR,  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM,  
GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE  
12-31-2026.

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

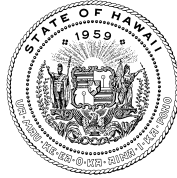
I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of James Tokioka as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka has led DBEDT since May 2023, having served in the public sector for over 26 years in both local county and state governments, and has demonstrated his ability to work collaboratively with other departments in the Maui wildfire recovery efforts. Further, his private sector business development initiatives and experience will serve him well in the leadership role at DBEDT. As such, I am confident that he has the skills and acumen to lead the department tasked with the responsibility for advancing the state to be globally competitive, dynamic and productive, and providing opportunities for all Hawaii's citizens.

I humbly ask for the Committee's favorable consideration in confirming him to the position of Director of DBEDT as I believe that Mr. Tokioka is suitably qualified and will be a great asset to the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 595.

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



KEITH A. REGAN  
COMPTROLLER  
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ  
  
MEOH-LENG SILLIMAN  
DEPUTY COMPTROLLER  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

**STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWE LAULĀ**  
P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

WRITTEN TESTIMONY  
OF  
KEITH A. REGAN, COMPTROLLER  
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES  
TO THE

**COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

FEBRUARY 6, 2024, 2:00 P.M.  
CONFERENCE ROOM 229 AND VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE, STATE CAPITOL

G.M. 595

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

Honorable Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism, I am providing testimony in **support** of GM595, the consideration and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

Having closely worked with Mr. Tokioka these past many months, I can attest to his exceptional abilities, strong work ethic, and unwavering commitment to public service. His extensive experience, as showcased in his resume, includes significant roles such as Deputy Director at Hawai'i's Department of Transportation and multiple terms in Hawai'i's State House of Representatives. These roles have equipped him with unparalleled skills in public policy, economic development, finance, budgeting, and

strategic planning. He has consistently applied these skills to develop and implement strategies that have helped thousands of Maui residents through one of the most difficult and tragic experiences our State has ever encountered.

Mr. Tokioka's dedication to public service is profound. His career path reflects a steadfast dedication to the welfare and advancement of the community. Known for his ability to forge strong relationships and collaborate effectively, his professionalism and commitment to public service are exemplary. This was evident in his immediate, direct, and compassionate response to the Maui wildfires. As a former resident of Maui with family and friends impacted by the wildfires, witnessing Mr. Tokioka pulling his team together, focusing their efforts, and delivering needed assistance, without delay, was heartwarming, inspiring, and clearly demonstrated his true character of selfless giving in a time of crisis. This is the kind of leadership that will serve the State well as we move towards recovery in West Maui.

In summary, considering his impressive career and the skills reflected in his resume, James Kunane Tokioka stands out as an extraordinary candidate for the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. His blend of qualifications, leadership abilities, and public service commitment make him ideally suited for this critical role. I strongly support his confirmation as Director.



# **NATURAL ENERGY LABORATORY OF HAWAII AUTHORITY**

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

Written Testimony Only

Statement of  
**Gregory P. Barbour**  
**Executive Director**

Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority  
before the

## **SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00 pm

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 and Videoconference

in consideration of

### **GM 595 RELATING TO THE CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION OF JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA AS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

The Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority (NELHA) is pleased to provide testimony in strong support of Mr. James K. Tokioka for the position of the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

I have worked closely with Mr. Tokioka over the past year in his position as DBEDT Director. I feel he is very qualified and has the ability to fill this important position. His experience and understanding of government, economic development, and the inter-workings of the Legislative branch provide him a with very detailed knowledge how to accomplish DBEDT's goals. He has a keen ability to work with all the players – the private sector, the

Counties and other State agencies and will be a willing key player in persuading everyone to work towards achieving our goals and moving our economy and State in the right direction.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.



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

SYLVIA LUKE  
LT. GOVERNOR  
KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA



BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO  
DIRECTOR  
KA LUNA HO'OKELE

RYAN YAMANE  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR  
KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMŌHALA LIMAHANA  
235 S. BERETANIA STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-2437

**LATE**

Statement of  
**BRENNA H. HASHIMOTO**  
Director, Department of Human Resources Development

Before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
2:00PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of  
**GM595** Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee,  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**, for a term to expire 12-31-2026

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and the members of the committee:

We strongly support the appointment of James Kunane Tokioka to the position of Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka has proven to be a dedicated public servant with considerable knowledge of government operations and the legislature. In the past year working with Mr. Tokioka, he has always displayed transparency, accountability, and responsiveness.

Prior to Mr. Tokioka's position as Interim Director of DBEDT he served as Deputy Director of the Airports Division of the Department of Transportation and as a member of the Hawaii House of Representatives for 16 years. He has extensive experience leading coordination efforts between the state, county, and private agencies as evidenced by his tremendous work to arrange temporary housing for the victims of the Maui wildfires.

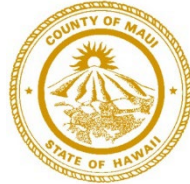
We look forward to collaborating closely with Mr. Tokioka on several current and future projects of mutual interest and concern.

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

**RICHARD T. BISSEN, JR.**  
Mayor

**JOSIAH NISHITA**  
Managing Director

**LUANA I. MAHI**  
Director



**OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**  
COUNTY OF MAUI  
200 SOUTH HIGH STREET  
ONE MAIN PLAZA, SUITE 305  
WAILUKU, HAWAII 96793  
[www.mauicounty.gov](http://www.mauicounty.gov)

February 5, 2024

Hawaii State Legislature  
Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

**RE: GM595 – Letter of support**

Dear Senators DeCoite and Wakai,

I am writing to express my full support for the nomination of James Kunane Tokioka for the esteemed government position as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

For the last 9 months, I have had the privilege of working closely with Jimmy. After the Maui wildfires, he has shown his unconditional support for me and the County of Maui. I can confidently attest to his exceptional qualifications, unwavering dedication, and profound commitment to fostering growth and prosperity within our community. Having personally benefited from his example, I have tried, and continue to try, to emulate his leadership skills in how I strive to lead my own team.

Throughout Jimmy's tenure he has consistently demonstrated exemplary leadership skills, strategic vision, and a deep understanding of the intricate dynamics of business, economic development, and tourism. Jimmy possesses an unparalleled passion for empowering small businesses, cultivating entrepreneurial spirit, and leveraging sustainable tourism practices to drive sustainable economic growth and diversification. He has great ability to forge meaningful partnerships, engage stakeholders, and navigate complex challenges with integrity and a calming presence that truly sets him apart as an ideal individual for this crucial role.

I completely endorse James Kunane Tokioka for this position and I firmly believe that Jimmy has the requisite expertise, integrity, and leadership acumen to make a profound impact in advancing the objectives and priorities of Hawaii. He is an asset to the State of Hawaii and will bring about positive change and drive sustainable growth for our State and all of our communities.

Thank you for considering my recommendation. Should you require any further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at 808-270-7224 or at [luana.i.mahi@co.maui.hi.us](mailto:luana.i.mahi@co.maui.hi.us).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luana Mahi".

Luana I. Mahi  
Director, Office of Economic Development

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
KE KE'ENA O KA MEIA  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 300 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-4141 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • INTERNET: [www.honolulu.gov](http://www.honolulu.gov)

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



MICHAEL D. FORMBY  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
PO'O HO'OKELE  
  
KRISHNA F. JAYARAM  
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O HO'OKELE

February 2, 2024

The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy,  
Economic Development, and Tourism  
Hawaii'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii'i 96813

SUBJECT: GM 595, Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism:

As the Managing Director of the City and County of Honolulu, it is my honor to offer my strongest support for the confirmation of James Tokioka as the Director of the State of Hawaii'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

I have been fortunate to work with James on numerous projects over the years and I have always been impressed with his professionalism, innovation, can-do attitude, and collaboration.

I respectfully ask for this Committee's favorable consideration of James Tokioka as the Director of the State of Hawaii'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

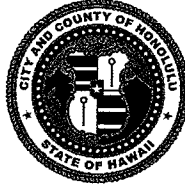
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Formby", written over a horizontal line.

Michael D. Formby  
Managing Director

**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
KE KE'ENA O KA MEIA  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

530 SOUTH KING STREET, ROOM 300 • HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813  
PHONE: (808) 768-4141 • FAX: (808) 768-4242 • INTERNET: [www.honolulu.gov](http://www.honolulu.gov)

RICK BLANGIARDI  
MAYOR  
MEIA



MICHAEL D. FORMBY  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
PO'O HO'OKELE

KRISHNA F. JAYARAM  
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR  
HOPE PO'O HO'OKELE

February 2, 2024

The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy,  
Economic Development, and Tourism  
Hawaii'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii'i 96813

SUBJECT: GM 595, Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism:

As the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu, it is my privilege to express my strong support for the confirmation of James Tokioka as the Director of the State of Hawaii'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

During my term as mayor, the City and County of Honolulu has had the opportunity to work directly with James and I have been impressed by his leadership skills and eagerness to collaborate on the tough issues and work towards solutions.

I respectfully ask for this Committee's favorable consideration of James Tokioka's confirmation as the Director of the State of Hawaii'i Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Blangiardi".

Rick Blangiardi  
Mayor



**Mitchell D. Roth**  
Mayor

**Deanna S. Sako**  
Managing Director

**Robert H. Command**  
Deputy Managing Director

## County of Hawai'i Office of the Mayor

25 Aupuni Street, Suite 2603 • Hilo, Hawai'i 96720 • (808) 961-8211 • Fax (808) 961-6553  
KONA: 74-5044 Ane Keohokalole Hwy., Bldg C • Kailua-Kona, Hawai'i 96740  
(808) 323-4444 • Fax (808) 323-4440

January 31, 2024

Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism  
Senator Lynn De Coite, Chair / Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Hawai'i State Legislature  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

**Subject:** GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 595 / Nomination of James Kunane Tokioka as  
Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism  
Term Ending: 12/31/2026

Aloha Senator Lynn DeCoite Chair, Senator Glenn Wakai Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism,

I wholeheartedly endorse the nomination of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. Serving as Interim Director since May 2023, James has demonstrated exceptional leadership in advancing initiatives for a globally competitive economy in Hawai'i.

Deeply involved in the Maui wildfire response and recovery efforts, James co-led the Joint Housing Task Force, supervised the launch of the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program, and serves as co-chair of the Maui Economic Recovery Commission, offering valuable guidance in support of local recovery priorities that align with the community's vision.

With over sixteen years of distinguished service in the Hawai'i State House of Representatives, James served in pivotal roles such as Majority Whip, Chair of the Legislative Management and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, and Vice Chair of Tourism. His extensive involvement in influential committees underscores his commitment to addressing diverse state issues.

James's decade-long tenure on the Kaaui County Council, along with his role on the Board of Directors for the National Association of Counties, showcases his ability to shape policy and advocate for regional interests at both local and national levels. His extensive background in the hospitality sector reflects his deep understanding of the industry, and his skill in encouraging coalitions has been instrumental in effecting positive change for Hawai'i residents.

Given his exceptional qualifications and dedication to serving the people of Hawai'i, I strongly support James Kunane Tokioka's nomination. Should you wish to discuss my recommendation further, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Roth  
Mayor/ County of Hawai'i

# OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

DEREK S.K. KAWAKAMI, MAYOR

REIKO MATSUYAMA, MANAGING DIRECTOR



**TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT  
GM 595 RELATING TO THE APPOINTMENT OF  
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
AS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

Before the  
**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism**  
February 6, 2024; 2:00 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

Testimony of Derek S.K. Kawakami  
Mayor of the County of Kaua'i

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

I testify in **strong support** for the appointment of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of the Department Business, Economic Development & Tourism. He is qualified to fulfill this responsibility given his professional and life experiences, leadership skills, and desire to serve his people and community.

I have known and worked with Jimmy for over two decades and was privileged to serve with him at the State of Hawai'i House of Representatives between 2011 and 2015 representing our respective districts on Kaua'i. He seeks to listen to all community members to gain understanding of the many diverse perspectives and uses this knowledge to solve problems and move forward with solutions.

In 2021, a huge shift occurred with the rental car industry with the advent of Turo rentals replacing the diminished fleets of traditional rental car agencies during the pandemic. Hundreds of additional cars were added to Kaua'i roads as residents sought to supplement the demand and their income by joining the Turo platform. Tokioka quickly used his leadership skills and business acumen to find parking areas and organize shuttles to help quell the initial chaos with this new visitor industry paradigm.

This is but one example of the skill, leadership, and experience Tokioka utilizes to solve problems. His forty years in the business and resort industry coupled with his government experience provide the expertise necessary to successfully direct the Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism mission in achieving a Hawai'i economy that embraces innovation and is globally competitive, dynamic and productive, and provides opportunities for all Hawai'i's citizens.

I ask that this Honorable Committee to **ADVISE AND CONSENT** to James Kunane Tokioka's nomination and forward the nomination to the full Senate for their consideration. Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony on this appointment.

Respectfully submitted,

Derek S.K. Kawakami  
Mayor, County of Kaua'i



# Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

*The Voice of Business*

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 2PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

**RE: GM 595 James Kunane Tokioka, For Consideration and Confirmation as Director of Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, for a term to expire 12-31-2026**

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

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports** the appointment of James Tokioka to the position of Director for the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Tokioka's energy, generosity of heart, willingness to think outside of the box and tackle our state's most pressing problems will ensure that DBEDT is under optimal leadership to lead us into the next century of economic growth. His passion for public service, experience in the hospitality industry and private sector, and proven effectiveness in these roles makes this appointee especially equipped to serve in this role.

In regards to his leadership experience, Mr. Tokioka is especially equipped to serve in this critical role. He has served as a Member of the Kaua'i County Council for 10 years; Member of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives for 16 years; Deputy Director of the Hawai'i State Department of Transportation Airports Division; and current Interim Director of the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. The Chamber appreciates Mr. Tokioka's grit and understanding of the hard work and endurance familiar to the business community and can trust the Department under his guidance. A proven collaborator, Mr. Tokioka takes the kind of initiative we need to work with the community and government agencies at the federal, state, and county levels, as well as with private organizations.

Since Mr. Tokioka's nomination as DBEDT director on May 5<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Tokioka's has shown steadfast commitment to the long-term recovery process following the Lahaina fire devastation through his innovative and strategic engagement. He co-led the Joint Housing Task Force to relocate more than 5,000 survivors from evacuation shelters into West Maui hotels and vacation rental units in 13 days, oversaw the launch of the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program which placed over 600 families into temporary housing, co-chaired the Maui Economic Recovery Commission tasked with providing guidance that will support local recovery priorities that align with the community's vision, and so much more during an unprecedented time of need for our state.

This legislative session may enhance the economic well-being of all of our islands, and Mr. Tokioka has the initiative, focus, and experience we need to harness this opportunity and strategically use it to drive our state's economic development, all the while keeping local businesses and our working people at top of mind.



# Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

*The Voice of Business*

The Chamber is confident that James Tokioka's extensive work experiences and leadership in government will enable him to effectively serve the State and community as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in proud support of this exceptional appointee.



# IRON WORKERS STABILIZATION FUND

February 1, 2024

Chair Lynn DeCoite  
Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Hawaii State Senate  
State Capitol

Dear Chair DeCoite & Members of the Committee:

Re: GM 595 – JIMMY TOKIOKA, CHAIR, DBEDT

The Ironworkers Stabilization Fund strongly supports Jimmy Tokioka's nomination for Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). Throughout his career, Mr. Tokioka has demonstrated a deep commitment to public service, a strong work ethic, and a proven ability to achieve results. His diverse background in both the public and private sectors makes him uniquely qualified for this role.

## Experience in Public Service:

- **10 years as a member of the Kaua'i County Council:** Mr. Tokioka's experience at the local level gives him a valuable understanding of the needs and challenges facing communities across Hawaii.
- **16 years as a member of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives:** During his time in the legislature, Mr. Tokioka championed important issues such as affordable housing, economic development, and disaster preparedness.
- **Deputy Director of the Hawai'i State Department of Transportation Airports Division:** This role demonstrates Mr. Tokioka's ability to manage complex operations and work effectively with stakeholders.
- **Interim Director of the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism:** His leadership during this critical time shows his commitment to serving the people of Hawaii and his ability to adapt to new challenges.

## Experience in the Private Sector:

- **24 years in the hospitality industry:** Mr. Tokioka's understanding of the tourism industry, a major driver of Hawaii's economy, is invaluable.
- **12 years working for Oceanic Time Warner Cable/Spectrum:** This experience honed his business acumen and his ability to negotiate complex deals.

## Leadership in Crisis:

- **Co-leading the Joint Housing Task Force after the Maui wildfires:** Mr. Tokioka's quick and decisive action helped displaced families find shelter and begin to rebuild their lives.

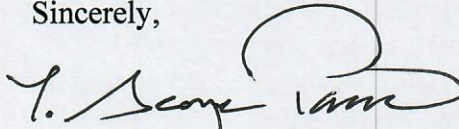
# IRON WORKERS STABILIZATION FUND

- **Launching the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program:** This program provided much-needed temporary housing for hundreds of families affected by the wildfires.
- **Co-chairing the Maui Economic Recovery Commission:** Mr. Tokioka's leadership is helping to guide Maui's recovery in a way that reflects the community's vision.

## Conclusion:

Jimmy Tokioka's dedication to public service, his diverse experience, and his proven ability to lead in times of crisis make him an ideal candidate for DBEDT. I urge you to confirm his nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. George Paris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

T. George Paris  
Managing Director



February 2, 2024

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, Senate President  
And Members of the Senate  
Thirty-Second State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 409  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Regarding: Testimony in: **Strong Support for Governor's Message No. 595**

Dear Senate President Kouchi and Members of the Senate,

It has been my sincere honor to be acquainted with Director James Kunane Tokioka for the past 28 years. I met then councilmember Tokioka when I was living on Kauai serving as General Manager of the Grand Hyatt Kauai. Testifying on various issues on the Island in front of the Council, I found him inquisitive, extremely bright and thorough. Mr. Tokioka was always available for questions and counsel on the various issues before him.

Forward to Mr. Tokioka's move to the State House approximately 16 years ago, we continued our working relationship with tourism related initiatives. Whenever I had policy questions or needed help with direction, he was there to help guide our teams.

After 16 years in the House, Mr. Tokioka takes on the challenge of DBEDT Director. Seems as though as soon as he began, the tragedy of the Maui fires occurred. Due to his very strong professional relationships from many sectors, he was able to immediately assemble a group of volunteers from tourism, government and the private businesses to help with the Maui Emergency. The first task Director Tokioka oversaw was collapsing the five assembled structures housing the survivors and opening up hotel rooms in Kaanapali for families to retreat to from this tragic experience. He organized daily count systems for the volunteer hotels that FEMA and the Red Cross referenced in helping the families stricken by this horrendous tragedy. On a daily basis he would work with tourism officials, FEMA, Red Cross and government officials to move people into hotels, timeshares and condos for a total of 7,800 people.

The Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi, Senate President  
And Members of the Senate  
Page 2

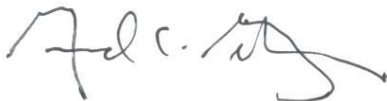
This work was all done under Mr. Tokioka's calm, intelligent, directive leadership. Later, a triage center and headquarters was set-up in our Oahu Convention Center to consolidate all the disciplines in one area for direct and precise communications.

Bottom line, I share this detail to relay the extent of the coordination and leadership skills that Director Tokioka used to efficiently and quickly assist thousands of our Ohana in a quick orderly fashion. The work is not done. He is now coordinating the effort to identify and relocate families into semi-permanent homes. This is no easy task with 3,000 families. Nonetheless, great strides are being made by many with Director Tokioka leading the group.

I would dare say, if not for Mr. Tokioka's years of hard work encompassing multiple industries and people, combined with extraordinary passion, we would be way behind where we are today with the tragedy in Maui.

I support James Kunane Tokioka for Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism unequivocally for the incredible and continuous achievement he has made with the County of Kauai and the State of Hawaii.

Mahalo,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Gibson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jerry Gibson, President  
Hawai'i Hotel Alliance



# THE LEGISLATIVE CENTER

1188 BISHOP STREET, SUITE 1003  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813-3304  
PHONE: (808) 537-4308 • FAX: (808)533-2739

## TLC

February 6, 2024

TO: Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair

FROM: Tim Lyons, CAE  
President

RE: GM 595 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director,  
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial  
Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

Senator DeCoite and Members of the Committee:

I am Tim Lyons, President of The Legislative Center. The Legislative Center manages several different trade associations and is involved in Government Relations.

With years at the Legislature representing various groups, we've had several opportunities to interface with Mr. Tokioka. We have found him to be forthcoming, interested in our subject matter, and helpful in his advise explanations.

Based on that we think he will make an excellent Director for DBEDT and we would highly recommend your advise and consideration.

Thank you.

Tuesday, February 6, 2024; 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism**

To: Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

From: Ray Vara  
President & CEO

**Re: Testimony in Support of GM 595  
Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department  
of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee,  
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026**

---

My name is Ray Vara and I am the President and CEO of Hawai'i Pacific Health. Hawai'i Pacific Health is a not-for-profit health care system comprised of its four medical centers – Kapi'olani, Pali Momi, Straub and Wilcox and over 70 locations statewide with a mission of creating a healthier Hawai'i.

**I write in support of GM 595** which submits for consideration and confirmation Gubernatorial Nominee JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka has demonstrated a dedication to public service throughout his career. He was a member of the Kauai County Council for ten years and was a member of the Hawai'i House of Representatives for sixteen years. Additionally, he served as the deputy director of the Department of Transportation, Airport Division and was the interim director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

For twenty-four years, Mr. Tokioka worked in the hospitality industry both in Hawai'i and on the Mainland. His career includes working in restaurants, managing hotels and owning restaurants. Mr. Tokioka has also worked with Oceanic Time Warner Cable/Spectrum for twelve years where his duties included overseeing new business management programs and securing the largest single contract for Hawai'i in the company's history.

More recently, since his nomination as director of DBEDT, Mr. Tokioka has been heavily involved in Maui's wildfire response and recovery efforts. He led the Joint Housing Task Force to relocate more than 5,000 survivors from evacuation shelters into West Maui hotels and vacation rental units. He was also involved with the launching of the Hawai'i

Fire Relief Housing Program which placed over 600 families into temporary housing, and he served as co-chair of the Maui Economic Recovery Commission which was tasked with providing guidance to support Maui's recovery priorities that align with the community's vision.

Through his public service, private employment and work in the tourism industry, Mr. Tokioka has gained the necessary skills and knowledge to lead DBEDT. I support Mr. Tokioka's nomination and urge this committee to confirm his appointment.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.





*Maui Hotel & Lodging*  
ASSOCIATION

Testimony of  
Lisa H. Paulson  
Executive Director  
Maui Hotel & Lodging Association

Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism  
**Governor Message 595: Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director,  
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee,  
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.**

February 6, 2024, 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 229

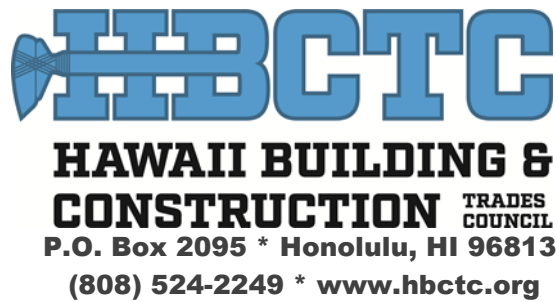
The Maui Hotel & Lodging Association (MHLA) is the legislative arm of the visitor industry for Maui County. We represent over 180 property and allied business members and over 19,000 rooms. **We strongly support GM 595**, Gubernatorial Nominee James Kunane Tokioka's confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Tokioka is a dedicated public servant, serving as a member of the Kauai County Council and Hawaii State House of Representatives, Deputy Director of the Hawaii State Department of Transportation Airports Division, and his current role as Interim Director of the Hawaii State Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. Additionally, he has an extensive background in the hospitality industry.

Personally, I have had the honor to work with Mr. Tokioka during his years at the State Legislature and now with the Maui Recovery. His immediate response and engagement with stakeholders and the Maui community led to displaced residents being placed into hotels and out of shelters in just 13 days.

I urge you to confirm James Tokioka as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, where he can bring both his extensive expertise and leadership experience and his commitment to a thriving Hawai'i.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.



February 5, 2024

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Committee on Energy, Economic Development  
& Tourism  
Hawaii State Capitol, Room 229  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

**RE: SUPPORT for GM 595 Gubernatorial Nominee JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the EET Committee:

My name is Gino Soquena, Executive Director of the Hawaii Building & Construction Trades Council which represents 18 construction trade unions in the State of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT** of JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA who is the Gubernatorial Nominee for the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

I have known and worked with Mr. Tokioka professionally for over 17 years. He has a strong background and extensive experience in tourism. In my experience working with Mr. Tokioka, I have found him to be fair and transparent with great communication skills and professionalism.

I have no doubt that Mr. Tokioka will make a great and effective leader of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. For these reasons I hope that this Committee agrees with my recommendation in confirming JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Mahalo Nui Loa,

*Gino Soquena*

Gino Soquena  
Executive Director  
Hawaii Building & Construction Trades Council



February 6, 2024

The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
The Honorable Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

Re: GM 595 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026

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

The Hawai'i Medical Service Association (HMSA) appreciates the opportunity to testify in support of GM 595, for the confirmation of JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT). Through his diverse professional experience and time spent in both State and County government, Mr. Tokioka has proven himself to be a community minded leader with a deep care for the people of Hawaii.

Each of our state agencies are complex and DBEDT is especially unique in the broad range of responsibilities that fall within its purview. The Department's mission is to achieve a Hawaii economy that embraces innovation and is globally competitive, dynamic, and productive, providing opportunities for all Hawaii's citizens and Mr. Tokioka's experience is suited to driving this forward. His experience in the tourism industry combined with his time working on complex issues through the county and state level as a legislator, affords him a unique perspective of the intersection between the private and public sectors and the symbiotic relationship between all stakeholder that must exist to ensure Hawaii's success.

Two months into his role as interim Director for DBEDT, Mr. Tokioka was faced with the difficult challenges that arose due to the West Maui wildfires. Through his leadership and ability to build relationships and foster a collaborative culture, DBEDT was able to play a critical role from day one and continues to support the recovery efforts in West Maui. He balances leading the recovery efforts while also instilling hope for a community who is envisioning and shaping their future.

Mr. Tokioka's values and commitment to our communities are what make him an ideal candidate for this position. He has served on numerous boards and has volunteered to serve whenever the call arises.

Thank you for the opportunity to support GM 595. Your consideration of the confirmation of Mr. JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mark Mugiishi, M.D., F.A.C.S.  
President and Chief Executive Officer



Tuesday, February 6, 2024 at 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 229

**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism**

To: Chair Lynn DeCoite  
Vice Chair Glenn Wakai

From: Paige Heckathorn Choy  
Associate Vice President, Government Affairs  
Healthcare Association of Hawaii

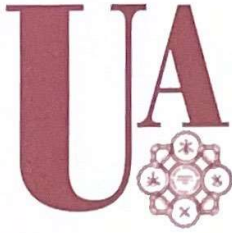
Re: **Support**  
**GM 595, Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, James Kunane Tokioka**

The Healthcare Association of Hawaii (HAH), established in 1939, serves as the leading voice of healthcare on behalf of 170 member organizations who represent almost every aspect of the healthcare continuum in Hawaii. Members include acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, hospices, assisted living facilities and durable medical equipment suppliers. In addition to providing access to appropriate, affordable, high-quality care to all of Hawaii's residents, our members contribute significantly to Hawaii's economy by employing over 30,000 people statewide.

Thank you for the opportunity to **support** Mr. James Kunane Tokioka's appointment as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT). Mr. Tokioka's long career in public service, along with his experience in private industry, will be an asset to the department as it navigates the difficult issues we face as a state regarding our economic future, and how to manage the cost of living crisis that is affecting the ability of all industries to recruit and retain a workforce for the future.

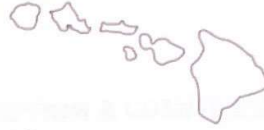
We are heartened by the expanded interest of this department in the needs of the healthcare community. There is a growing need for healthcare services and supporting workers who are themselves having to provide informal, unpaid care to family members. We look forward to opportunities to work more closely with all agencies, including DBEDT, to address the workforce challenges we are facing in the healthcare industry.

Thank you for considering our testimony in support of Mr. Tokioka's nomination.



Founded 1889

## PLUMBERS AND FITTERS LOCAL 675 UNITED ASSOCIATION



February 6, 2023

HEARING DATE: Tuesday, February 6, 2024

Time: 2:00 PM

Place: State Capitol; Conference Room 229

RE: **GM-595:** Consideration and Confirmation as the Director, Dept of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee;

Aloha, I am Valentino Ceria, Business Manager/Financial Secretary of the Plumbers and Fitters United Association Local Union 675, testifying in support of James Tokioka to serve as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Having known James for many years and working closely with him as fellow members of the Maui Economic Recovery Commission, where he currently serves as co-chair, I have witnessed his abilities as an accomplished professional. He has a wealth of experience in helping the community, serving in roles like Kaua'i County Council and Hawaii State House Representative. With over 20 years of experience in the hotel and restaurants industries, he understands business challenges from different perspectives.

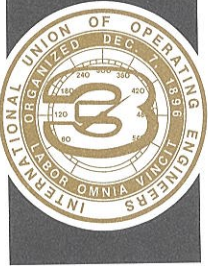
Thus, I consider it a great honor to submit this testimony in support of James Tokioka to serve as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Valentino Ceria  
Business Manager/  
Financial Secretary





# OPERATING ENGINEERS LOCAL UNION No. 3

2181 LAUWILIWILI STREET, KAPOLEI, HI 96707 • (808) 845-7871 • FAX (808) 682-0906  
Jurisdiction: Northern California, Northern Nevada, Utah, Hawaii, and the Mid-Pacific Islands

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February 5, 2024

Honorable, Lynn DeCoite, Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism, Chair  
Honorable, Glenn Wakai, Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism, Vice Chair  
Honorable Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

**RE: GM 595- SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR,  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE,  
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12-31-2026.**

Chair DeCoite,

My name is Ana Tuiasosopo. I am the District Representative and Trustee for Operating Engineers Local 3. We are the largest Construction Trades Local in the United States. I and the members of Operating Engineers Local 3 support GM 595 and support the consideration and confirmation of Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism Director, Jimmy Tokioka.

Mr. Tokioka is an accomplished public servant leveraging a decade-long tenure on the Kauai County Council and a distinguished sixteen-year incumbency within the Hawaii State House of Representatives. During the aftermath of the Maui Wildfires, Mr. Tokioka played a key role in working with tourism sector leaders in negotiating agreements, coordinating logistics, and facilitating the movement of displaced families to hotel and vacation rental properties throughout the island of Maui.

We humbly ask for your support and favorable consideration of GM 595.

Sincerely,

Ana Tuiasosopo  
Hawaii District Representative, Trustee  
Hawaii Operating Engineers Local 3



**HAWAII MASONS' AND PLASTERERS' UNIONS HAWAII INDUSTRY  
STABILIZATION COMMITTEE**

2251 North School Street | Honolulu, Hawaii 96819

Phone: (808) 452-0350 | Fax: (808) 452-1063



Uploaded via Website

**TO: THE HAWAII STATE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

**SUBJECT: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of GM595 for consideration and confirmation  
as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism,  
Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-  
31-2026.**

DATE: Tuesday, February 6, 2024

TIME: 2:00PM

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice-Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee:

I have known Mr. Tokioka for several years and am deeply impressed by his integrity and professionalism. He is well versed in all aspects of Hawaii's business community and has been directly involved in encouraging investment in and the diversification of our local economy.

Mr. Tokioka's background, knowledge and past employment all qualify him for appointment. Jimmy is a diligent professional with a broad range of experience and a demonstrated commitment to the community that I believe will be beneficial to the Department.

I strongly believe that Mr. Tokioka is an asset to the State and am grateful for his willingness to serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for GM595

Michael R. Yadao  
Executive Director

Hawaii Masons' and Plasterers' Unions Hawaii Industry Stabilization Committee



February 5, 2024

Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair/ Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Hawai'i State Legislature  
415 S. Beretania Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Subject: GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 595/ Nomination of James Kunane  
Tokioka as Director of the Department of Business, Economic  
Development and Tourism  
Term Ending: 12/31/2026

Aloha Senator Lynn DeCoite Chair, Senator Glenn Wakai Vice Chair, and Members of the  
Committee on Energy, Economic Development and Tourism,

I write on behalf of the Hawai'i Council of Mayors in strong support of the nomination of James  
Kunane Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and  
Tourism. Since his serving as Interim Director since May 2023, James has demonstrated  
exceptional leadership in advancing the initiatives for a competitive economy and providing  
opportunities for Hawai'i's citizens especially for those impacted by the Maui fires.

James's role in government is extensive including ten years on the Kaua'i County Council  
serving as Vice Chair and overseeing a \$102.5 million operating budget and a \$16.8 million  
capital improvements budget. He also served as one of three representatives from Hawai'i on the  
Board of Directors for the National Association of Counties, actively shaping policy and  
advocating for regional interests at a national level.

During his sixteen years at the Hawai'i State House of Representatives, James served as Majority  
Whip, Chair of the Legislative Management and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee, and Vice  
Chair of Tourism. With his vast experience over 24 years in the hospitality industry and with  
Oceanic Time Warner Cable/Spectrum overseeing new business management programs, James  
brings an extensive skillset to lead and direct Hawai'i's business and economic development.

Since his nomination as Interim Director, James has been deeply involved with the Maui wildfire  
response and recovery efforts. He co-led the Joint Housing Task Force to relocate more than  
5000 survivors from evacuation shelters into hotels and vacation rentals, oversaw the launch of  
the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program, and co-chairs the Maui Economic Recovery  
Commission.

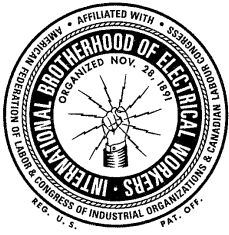


We are confident James will work to present opportunities to enhance the economic well-being of our islands and focus on strategic investments that will drive economic development and support local businesses and strongly support his nomination as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Roth", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mitchell D. Roth, Chair  
Hawai'i Council of Mayors



# International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

LOCAL UNION NO. 1186 • Affiliated with AFL-CIO

1935 HAU STREET, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor • HONOLULU, HI 96819-5003  
TELEPHONE (808) 847-5341 • FAX (808) 847-2224

TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
AND TOURISM

Hearing on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 2:00PM, Conference Room 229

RE: TESTIMONY IN **STRONG SUPPORT** OF NOMINEE JAMES KUNANE  
TOKIOKA, **GM 595**

Honorable Chair Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Glenn Wakai, and Members of the Committee Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism:

The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 1186 (IBEW 1186), is comprised of over 3,000 men and women working in electrical construction, telecommunications, civil service employees, and educator and faculty associations.

IBEW 1186 **SUPPORTS** the nomination of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

Former Representative Tokioka has the combination of business and legislative experience that is necessary to navigate the complicated, yet vital, functions of DBEDT. Rep. Tokioka has spent many years analyzing various departments within the State, and is especially knowledgeable in the area of tourism as he served as the Vice Chair of the Tourism Committee during his time at the legislature.

IBEW 1186 has complete faith in the ability of Rep. Tokioka to direct this very important department and build the relationships that are necessary for success. DBEDT has so many arms and attached agencies that it requires a person with the knowledge and experience that Rep. Tokioka already possesses. IBEW 1186 has spent nearly 20 years working with Rep. Tokioka on important issues related to our electrical and building construction industry and it was always our pleasure to work together with him.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this **STRONG SUPPORT** of **GM 595**.

Sincerely,

Damien T.K. Kim  
Business Manager/  
Financial Secretary



**OPERATIVE PLASTERERS' AND CEMENT MASONS'  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION LOCAL #630, AFL-CIO**

2251 North School Street • Honolulu, HI 96819  
Phone No.: (808) 841-0491 • Fax No.: (808) 847-4782



TO: SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND  
TOURISM

SUBJECT: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF GM595 SUBMITTING FOR  
CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR,  
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND  
TOURISM, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA,  
FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12-31-2026

Hearing

DATE: Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
TIME: 2:00pm  
PLACE: Hawaii State Capitol  
Rm 229

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee:

The Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association Local 630 (OPCMIA Local 630) is a trade union of over 900 plasterers and cement masons. Plasterer members of the union finish interior walls and ceilings of buildings and apply plaster on masonry, metal, and wire lath or gypsum. While cement mason members are responsible for all concrete construction, including the pouring and finishing of slabs, steps, wall tops, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, and paving. Local 630 is to represent its members in all matters related to the construction industry, while improving the quality of construction and protecting the public interest.

Financial Secretary-Treasurer & Business Manager of OPCMIA Local 630, Peter T. Iriarte, and the members of OPCMIA Local 630 stand in strong support of GM595 SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION AS THE DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM, GUBERNATORIAL NOMINEE, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 12-31-2026.

Mr. Tokioka brings valuable and extensive experience and is knowledge at various levels of government, including a decade on the Kauai County Council, sixteen years as a State Representative, and valuable time working in the private sector. This collective experience is exactly what DBEDT needs as it continues the complex and challenging goals of business growth, job creation and sustainable economic development.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of GM595.



*WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY*

February 6, 2024

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

**RE: Governor’s Message No. 595 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire on December 31, 2026  
Hearing date: February 6, 2024, 2:00 p.m.**

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

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of Young Brothers, LLC (“YB”) offering **SUPPORT** of James Kunane Tokioka’s nomination.

YB is a common carrier by water, transporting property by tug and barge between the islands of Oahu, Hawaii, Kauai, Maui, Molokai, and Lanai. YB is currently the only water common carrier authorized to transport property under Chapter 271G, Hawaii Revised Statutes (“HRS”) (i.e., the Hawaii Water Carrier Act), subject to the regulatory authority of the Public Utilities Commission of the State of Hawaii (“PUC”). Since 1900, customers across Hawaii have relied on YB’s frequent, regular, and universal sailings to serve as the bridge that connects all communities in this island-state.

Mr. Tokioka is well-qualified and well-suited to lead the State as the Director for the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (“DBEDT”). As you know, Mr. Tokioka is an accomplished public servant with significant experience serving as a legislator at both the State and County levels, Deputy Director for the State Department of Transportation, Airports Division, and, most recently, Director of DBEDT. Mr. Tokioka also has extended experience in the private sector.

Mr. Tokioka’s knowledge, experience, and leadership skills will be an invaluable resource to DBEDT and to the State of Hawaii.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Mr. Tokioka’s nomination.

Sincerely,

Jay Ana  
President

Hawai'i State Senate Testimony

GM595 – Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, James Kunane Tokioka

**RE: Strong support of GM595**

February 5, 2024

The Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement writes in enthusiastic **support** of James Kunane Tokioka's confirmation as the director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

Mr. Tokioka is a public servant at his core. As a member of the Kaua'i County Council for a decade, he oversaw a \$102.5 million operating budget and a \$16.8 million capital improvement budget. Throughout his 16-year tenure as State Representative, Mr. Tokioka fought for numerous structural improvements for his home district. Additionally, as the Deputy Director for the Department of Transportation, Mr. Tokioka was instrumental in the development, management, and upkeep of global air transportation.

Perhaps most importantly, Mr. Tokioka understands the full breadth of the hospitality industry because he has worked those jobs himself. From bussing tables to managing hotels to owning restaurants, Mr. Tokioka can speak directly to the realities of tourism. Mr. Tokioka's 24 years of hospitality experience, coupled with his 27 years of civil service to the State of Hawai'i, makes him the ideal candidate for the director position.

If there were any doubts around Mr. Tokioka's capabilities, he has more than proven his qualifications through his deep involvement in Maui wildfire response and recovery efforts since his nomination as DBEDT Director. He co-led the Joint Housing Task Force to relocate more than five thousand residents from evacuation shelters to rental units in less than two weeks. He also oversaw the launch of the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program, which placed over 600 families into temporary housing. He is currently chairing the Maui Economic Recovery Commission, tasked with providing guidance that will support local recovery priorities that align with the community's vision. If Mr. Tokioka can work this diligently in times of crisis, we have no doubt that he is the perfect choice as the DBEDT Director.

For these reasons, we humbly ask that you **SUPPORT GM595** and James Kunane Tokioka's confirmation. His appointment would be a great benefit to the Department, the State, and economic development in Hawai'i.

Mahalo,



**Kūhō Lewis**  
Chief Executive Officer, CNHA



Testimony Before the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024; 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, HI 96813

**RE: Support for Governor's Message No. 595**

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

The Kaua'i Chamber extends our resolute support for Governor's Message No. 595, advocating for the reappointment of James Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka's journey in public service is marked by significant tenures—spanning over a decade on the Kaua'i County Council, 16 impactful years in the Hawai'i State House of Representatives, and pivotal roles within the Hawai'i State Department of Transportation and DBEDT. His diverse experience advancing through the hospitality industry to strategic positions at Oceanic Time Warner Cable/Spectrum showcase his versatile leadership and deep understanding of our state's economic landscape.

Notably, since his appointment, Mr. Tokioka has played a pivotal role in leading recovery and support efforts in the aftermath of the Maui wildfires. Demonstrating an unwavering dedication to the well-being of Hawai'i's communities, his leadership has been central to mobilizing resources, coordinating with local and state agencies, and ensuring that the affected families receive the necessary support and assistance. His actions reflect a deep commitment to the resilience and recovery of Hawai'i's communities during critical times.

Mr. Tokioka's vision for enhancing the economic prosperity of our islands, his strategic focus on investments that will drive development and support local businesses, and his ability to collaborate across government and private sectors are invaluable assets for Hawai'i.

We, at the Kauai Chamber of Commerce, strongly endorse James Tokioka's reappointment as the Director of DBEDT. We believe in his ability to continue to lead with integrity, vision, and aloha, driving forward the initiatives that will ensure the prosperity and resilience of Hawai'i's economy and its people.

Mahalo for your consideration of our support for James Tokioka's continued service as DBEDT director. We are confident in his leadership and look forward to the positive impacts of his ongoing contributions to our state.

Sincerely,

Mark Perriello  
President & CEO

---

Randall Francisco

West Kauai Business & Professional Association  
P.O. Box 299  
Waimea, Kauai, HI  
96796

February 5, 2024

Testimony: Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development & Tourism  
February 6, 2024, 2:00 PM, Conference Room 229  
Hawaii State Capitol, 415 South Beretania Street, Hnl. HI., 96813

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and Members,

**RE:** Support for GM 595: Jimmy Tokioka

My name is Randall Francisco, President of West Kauai Business & Professional Association. This letter is in strong support for Director Tokioka to continue to lead DBEDT. I have known Jimmy since I first became president of the Kauai Chamber of Commerce. I have worked with him in many capacities on behalf of Kauai and advancing both business, community and individual interests for the betterment of all. As a representative, I always appreciated his time to listen and learn in order to make a decision that helped our island. Fast forward to his current tenure: I truly appreciated Jimmy's presence at the 2023 Hawaii On the Hill in Washington DC which is the premiere summer "Taste of Event" held during each summer. He previously attended as a representative and always supported the businesses by working closely with all Hawaii attendees, mainland partners and members of congress.

I eventually worked for Mayor Carvalho as the Kauai Film Commissioner and expanded the commission to include business advocacy as well as incorporating film as part of the Creative Industries. His counsel and support guided me in having two movies filmed on Kauai with the number one actor in the world, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, including Jungle Cruise/Disney and the off-shoot of Fast & Furious which was Hobbs and Shaw/Universal Pictures. Jimmy's larger vision of business & industry also stems from his initial foray into the food and beverage/tourism industry which helped lay the foundation for his small business and eventual advocacy and support for Hawaii's diverse economy. He is indeed the person to lead this department who brings a wealth of skill-sets, including ability to work with people of diverse backgrounds and experiences, and, even a willingness to ask questions that sometimes necessitates his critical thinking cap to take a step back and rely on his unit leaders to provide the insight and knowledge to make decisions for the people of Hawaii.

Aloha and Mahalo Nui Loa for your time and consideration,

---

Randall “Randy” Francisco

President, West Kauai Business & Professional Association

- County of Kauai Film Commissioner (former)
- Kauai Chamber of Commerce President/CEO (former)
- Kauai Filipino Chamber of Commerce President (former)
- Kauai Philippine Cultural Center - “A Place for All” Board of Director/Officer (former)
- Hanapepe Economic Alliance Vice-President (former)
- Mala Pono Health Services/MPHS Board of Director (former)
- Assistant Professor, Coordinator, Continuing Education, Kapiolani Community College (former)
- Dean, Continuing Education & Workforce Development, Leeward Community College (former)



**Melissa Pavlicek**  
1099 Alakea Street, Suite 2530  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Date: February 6, 2024  
Committee: Senate Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism Committee  
Re: GM 595, Nomination of James Tokioka as the Director of DBEDT

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the committee!

I am writing in support of James Kunane Tokioka to serve as the director of the state department of business, economic development, and tourism

My name is Melissa Pavlicek. I am an attorney and small business owner who resides in Honolulu. I have had experience working as an advocate on behalf of small business, non-profit organizations, and business-related coalitions. I have served as the executive director of trade organizations with many members of the Kauai business community. It is in connection with Jimmy Tokioka's service as an elected official that I first became acquainted with his business acumen and above all an ability to bring together community to achieve solutions. Within the last three years, we worked collaboratively to resolve a long-standing and contentious community issue related to the business community in Kauai.

I have had many other opportunities to personally observe Jimmy Tokioka's work and I truly respect and value his commitment to public service, his being diligent and prepared, and his outreach and openness to community stakeholders.

Please favorably approve Jimmy Tokioka's nomination.

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 1:06:49 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ronald Williams	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am proud to support James Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business Economics Development and Tourism. His Leadership skills and his understanding of the Hawaii culture and business climate give him the tools to be successful. I am confident he will continue to help Hawaii be successful. Thank you

Ronald Williams

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 1/31/2024 4:17:06 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lui Hokoana	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

January 31, 2024

Aloha Chair Decoite,

I am writing to support the confirmation of James Kunane Tokiokia for the Director of The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

I support his nomination because I believe he has the skills and experience to lead this important department. His leadership will be essential as the state addresses the unprecedented disaster caused by the Maui wildfires.

Under Mr. Tokioka’s stewardship the Maui Economic Recovery Commission (ERC) has been created. The ERC brings together leaders from the community; representing business, workforce, health, environment, and housing. The focus of the group is to develop a plan for the Maui community to recover from the Maui wildfires. The first meeting was well attended and a lot was accomplished to organize the group in order to develop a comprehensive economic recovery plan for Maui.

Leaders from Hawaii’s major banks, the heads of the labor unions, Hawaii healthcare presidents, and grassroots community leaders were in attendance in service to the Maui community. These people took the time to attend this, all day, meeting because Mr. Tokioka put out the call to them. It is because of his reputation amongst Hawaii’s leaders these busy people stepped forward to assist. He personally asked me to join the team and it is likely he did the same for the other members of the ERC.

I know as the Interim Director of the department he has also developed a statewide plan for economic development. As the Chancellor at Maui College I am aligning the college’s strategic plan with the department’s vision to grow the Creative Media and Ag/Value Added industries in Hawaii.

Lastly, I believe that Mr. Tokioka has the passion and compassion for the people of Hawaii. In my opinion this is his greatest asset – he knows who this work benefits – the people of Hawaii. This will serve as the foundation of his work as he leads the Department of Business, Economic Development and tourism.

With warm regards,

Lui K Hokoana, EdD

February 6, 2024

**The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair**

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

**RE: GM 595 - Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.**

**HEARING: Tuesday, February 6, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.**

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

My name is Lyndsey Garcia and I **support** GM 595, submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

Mr. Tokioka has an extensive record of public service, having served a decade on the Kaua'i County Council and 16 years in the Hawai'i State House of Representatives. His tenure has demonstrated a deep understanding of legislative processes, public governance, and the challenges and opportunities facing Hawaii's residents. Additionally, his roles as the Deputy Director of the Department of Transportation Airports Division and as the current director of DBEDT showcase his ability to manage complex organizations.

Beyond his governmental roles, Mr. Tokioka has significant experience in the private sector as well. His background includes working and managing hotels across Hawai'i and the United States, engaging in entrepreneurial ventures in restaurant ownership, and serving as the Business Manager of Oceanic Time Warner Cable, where he directed strategic initiatives. These diverse experiences uniquely position him in understanding Hawaii's economy and business sectors.

Mr. Tokioka's proven track record, coupled with his diverse experience in both the public and private sectors, and his unwavering commitment to public service make him an ideal candidate for this role.

For the foregoing reasons, I support the confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka as Director of DBEDT.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 2/1/2024 8:40:55 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Curt Otaguro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair DeCoite -

I respectfully request your support to confirm James "Jimmy" Tokioka as Director for the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. I have known Jimmy over 20 years during my career as a banker and more recently as a government official. His contributions to Kauai during their natural disasters was instrumental during their recovery several decades ago. As DBEDT Director, I believe he will be instrumental as the State begins its rebuilding of the Lahaina community and its long-term vision. His ability to network at all levels of government as well as private industry will enhance the economic development for our State. Thank you for your consideration to confirm Mr. Tokioka.

February 1, 2024

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair and Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Hawaii State Senate

State Capitol

Dear Honorable Chair DeCoite & Members on the Energy, Economic, Development, and Tourism  
Committee:

Re: Strong Support for GM 595 – JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA nomination for Director, DBEDT

My name is Mel Kahele. I'm currently employed with The Ironworkers Stabilization Fund. I have known James for many years, and I strongly support Mr. Tokioka's nomination for Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). He has always conducted himself with integrity and with professionalism as State House Representative for over two decades, ten years on the Kauai Council. He is currently the Director of DEBDT, and I believe he is doing a great job. With his experience in the private and public sector he will be able to overcome the challenges the State is currently going through, especially the recovery and rebuilding of the Island of Maui. I humbly ask that you confirm Mr. Tokioka's nomination.

Sincerely,

Mel Kahele

## TESTIMONY

TO: Chair Lynn DeCoite, Vice Chair Glenn Wakai, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference – State Capitol

FROM: Mary Albitz *Mary Albitz*

DATE: February 6, 2024

SUBJECT: **GM 595** – Submitting for Consideration and Confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) – **James Kunane Tokioka**

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I am the current Chair of the Small Business Regulatory Review Board (SBRRB) and have been a board member for the past five years. I am personally offering testimony in support of GM 595 for Mr. James Kunane Tokioka's consideration and confirmation as the Director of DBEDT, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

The SBRRB is a quasi-attached agency of DBEDT, and among its duties, the members review requests from small business owners for review of any rule adopted by a state agency and organize and hold conferences on problems affecting small business.

In the short time Mr. Tokioka has been the director of DBEDT, it is evident that he brings strong leadership acumen. Right from the start, he has shown strong support for the SBRRB. It is my understanding from SBRRB/DBEDT staff that Mr. Tokioka brings a breath of fresh air to the department. He is respectful, engaging, and considerate to all staff. He follows protocol and wants DBEDT, which consists of a variety of divisions and attached agencies, to thrive.

Thank you for allowing me to testify in support of Mr. Tokioka's nomination under GM 595.



JOSH GREEN, M.D.  
GOVERNOR



DOUGLAS MURDOCK  
CHIEF INFORMATION  
OFFICER

## OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HI 96810-0119  
Ph: (808) 586-6000 | Fax: (808) 586-1922  
ETS.HAWAII.GOV

Testimony of  
DOUGLAS MURDOCK  
Chief Information Officer  
Enterprise Technology Services

Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE NO. 595  
NOMINATION OF JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, AS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the committee:

I am writing in support of Governor Josh Green's nomination of James Kunane Tokioka as Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka has a wealth of experience in the public sector, having served on both the Kauai County Council and in the State House of Representatives for more than two decades. He also has valuable experience in the private sector working in restaurant ownership and hotel management in Hawaii and across the continental United States.

Most recently he worked at the State Department of Transportation as the Deputy Director for the Airports Division.

Mr. Tokioka is a dedicated public servant, and I am pleased to support his confirmation.

Marlene Hiraoka  
Honolulu, Hawaii

GM595

Gubernatorial Nominee, James Kunane Tokioka  
Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the committee:

It is an honor to submit this testimony in strong support of Mr. James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka has extensive knowledge and experience in the public sector having served as a Kauai County Council Member and also in the State House of Representatives. Since his appointment to DBEDT by Governor Josh Green, he has demonstrated his commitment to continuing public service as he undertakes the challenges of major economic development initiatives.

I look forward to working with Mr. Tokioka and his leadership in supporting DBEDT's mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Governor's Message 595, Mr. James Kunane Tokioka, Director, DBEDT.

**Testimony of Valerie M. Kato, Deputy Director of the Department of Health**

**In SUPPORT of Governor's Message 595**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire at noon on 12-31-2026.

SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, CHAIR

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Hearing Date: February 6, 2024

Room Number: 229

I am writing in my individual capacity in support of the nomination and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka to serve as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Tokioka has been serving as the DBEDT Director since May 5, 2023 and has a long history of public service including serving as the Deputy Director for the Hawaii State Department of Transportation Airports Division, State Representative for District 15 for 16 years, and Councilmember of the Kauai County Council for 10 years. In addition, his experience in the hospitality industry and proven leadership skills will be a strong asset to the Department.

Therefore, I respectfully ask for Mr. Tokioka's confirmation as the DBEDT Director. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

To Whom it May Concern,

February 4, 2024

In relation to [Governor's Message No. 595](#), I am writing in support of James Kunane Tokioka to serve as the **Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism**.

Please accept my testimony in support of James Tokioka's DBEDT confirmation, which has been scheduled for **Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 2:00pm**. For your consideration:

- **Public service is his passion and Mr. Tokioka has proudly served in multiple roles:**
  - Member of the Kaua'i County Council for 10 years
  - Member of the Hawai'i State House of Representatives for 16 years
  - Deputy Director of the Hawai'i State Department of Transportation Airports Division
  - Interim Director of the Hawai'i State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism
  
- **Prior to Mr. Tokioka's public service, he's worked his way through the hospitality industry:**
  - Spanning 24 years in Hawai'i and across the United States, from bussing tables to managing hotels and owning restaurants
  
- **In addition, Mr. Tokioka has spent 12 years working for Oceanic Time Warner Cable/Spectrum:**
  - Oversaw new business management programs & assisted with securing the largest single contract for Hawai'i in the company's history
  
- **Since Mr. Tokioka's nomination as DBEDT director on May 5<sup>th</sup>, he has been deeply involved in Maui wildfire response and recovery efforts:**
  - Co-led the Joint Housing Task Force to relocate more than 5,000 survivors from evacuation shelters into West Maui hotels and vacation rental units in 13 days
  - Oversaw the launch of the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program which placed over 600 families into temporary housing
  - Co-chairing the Maui Economic Recovery Commission tasked with providing guidance that will support local recovery priorities that align with the community's vision

As rebuilding Lahaina is a long-term process, he remains committed to working with the community and government agencies at the federal, state, and county levels, as well as with private organizations.

This legislative session presents opportunities to enhance the economic well-being of all of our islands, and he will be focused on strategic investments that will drive economic development and support local businesses.

I appreciate your consideration in supporting my nomination for James Kunane Tokioka to serve as DBEDT director.

Sincerely,  
Gregg Fujimoto

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 6:06:12 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Myoung Oh	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the committee,

I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my strong support of GM 505, appointment of Mr. James Kunane Tokioka to serve as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

I have had the privilege of knowing Mr. Tokioka for over 15 years. During this time, we have interacted in a variety of professional and social environments. These experiences have given me a comprehensive understanding of his capabilities and character. Mr. Tokioka possesses a unique combination of skills, knowledge, and passion that makes him exceptionally suited to his role as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT).

His expertise is not limited to a single domain. He has a diverse background with significant experience in the hotel and hospitality industry, the small business sector, and the tourism industry. This broad range of experience gives him a holistic understanding of the economic landscape, which is crucial for his role at DBEDT.

Mr. Tokioka's leadership style is characterized by clear direction and strong interpersonal skills. He has a knack for building relationships and fostering a collaborative environment, which is key to driving the success of any organization. His ability to communicate effectively and work well with others will undoubtedly contribute to advancing the goals and mission of DBEDT.

I respectfully request your favorable consideration of advise and consent to the confirmation of Mr. James Kunane Tokioka.

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 7:27:33 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jared Redulla	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony in support of James Tokioka for Appointment as Director of the Department of Business, Economic, Development, and Tourism.

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

I am writing in support of James Tokioka's nomination for Director of the Department of Business, Economic, Development, and Tourism.

Jimmy's experience as a State representative and Council person shows that he is very experienced in government work and accents his passion for serving the public.

However, I am in support of Jimmy's nomination because of who Jimmy is as a person. In my work as a state employee, I had to regularly come to the Capitol to appear before the Legislature. Early on, I found coming to the Capitol to be very stressful and often intimidating. This was when I first met Jimmy Tokioka who was serving as a legislator at the time. Every time I saw Jimmy Tokioka in the Capitol Building, he took the time to say hello and shake my hand. This small gesture was something I deeply appreciated and speaks to the man that he is.

It can be said in life that how we do the small things is ultimately how we will do the big things. Jimmy Tokioka's small gesture of Aloha to me is indicative that when it comes to the big things he will accomplish as Director of DBEDT, he will also do so with the spirit of kindness and Aloha.

I support Jimmy Tokioka's nomination for Director.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Jared Redulla



**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM  
SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, CHAIR**

Tuesday, February 6, 2024, 2:00 p.m.  
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 229

**Personal Testimony of Deborah Kim Morikawa, Deputy Director  
Department of Health  
In SUPPORT of Governor's Message 595**

I am writing in my individual capacity to express my support of the nomination and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka to serve as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Tokioka has demonstrated a passion for public service and has held both legislative and executive branch positions. He comes with experience in the hospitality industry and has been serving as the DEBEDT Director since May 5, 2023.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of James Kunane Tokioka to serve as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.



**Michael S. Vincent**

GM 595: CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION  
OF  
JAMES TOKIOKA

Gubernatorial Nominee as Director,  
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism  
Before the Senate Committee on  
Energy, Economic Development and Tourism  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024; 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol Conference Room 229, Via Videoconference

Testifier: Michael S. Vincent

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Walai, and members of the Committee:

I am writing in support of the nomination of James Tokioka to serve as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

My personal or working relationship with James has been limited to working with him in the Legislature, briefly with the Department of Transportation, and on the Cabinet. I have enjoyed my time with him and have found him to be kind and professional in his work and relationships with others. He has a long-demonstrated desire to serve the public and does his best in his responsibilities. Not everyone in government service prioritizes their responsibilities to the public, but James serves because he wants to improve things for our community. He understands the obligations that come with the responsibility and can see that he will be a great Director of DBEDT.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of James.

Michael S. Vincent

Testimony of Isaac W. Choy, CPA

Before the Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Tuesday, February 6, 2024 2:00 PM

GM 595  
IN STRONG SUPPORT

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and Committee Members.

Thank you for the opportunity to lend my voice in Strong Support of the confirmation of my friend Mr. James Kunane Tokioka.

I have known Mr. Tokioka for over fifteen year and worked closely with him in many capacities. Mr. Tokioka is a person who believes in personal relationships to accomplish the mission of this state. He is certainly not a micromanager but allow his employee to flourish and grow on their own. His style of management reflects all that is good government administration, and he will lead the department well.

He is in a perfect place at the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. I look forward to working with him to accomplish the goals that he has set out for his agency.

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



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAII  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
AND REHABILITATION**  
*Ka 'Oihana Ho'omalū Kalaima  
a Ho'oponopono Ola*  
1177 Alakea Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

TOMMY JOHNSON  
DIRECTOR

Melanie Martin  
Deputy Director  
Administration

Vacant  
Deputy Director  
Correctional Institutions

Sanna Muñoz  
Deputy Director  
Rehabilitation Services  
and  
Programs

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY**

TESTIMONY ON GOVERNOR MESSAGE NO. 595  
RELATING TO THE NOMINATION OF JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA  
TO BE THE DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

By

Melanie Martin, Deputy Director for Administration

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

Tuesday, February 6, 2024; 2:00 p.m.  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Via Video Conference

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

I am pleased to provide testimony in support of the confirmation of James Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). Mr. Tokioka has served as a legislator on the Kauai County Council and the State House of Representatives for many years. He has also served in the executive branch as the Deputy Director for Airports with the Department of Transportation and for the last eight months as acting DBEDT Director.

Having served in both branches of government, Mr. Tokioka understands the interrelationship between both branches, which is key to being an effective director. This unique perspective enhances his ability to work collaboratively and cooperatively with the Legislature and other agencies within the executive branch. His outstanding leadership was unveiled in the aftermath of the Maui wildfires in which he co-led the Joint Housing Task Force Program and oversaw the Hawaii Fire Relief Housing Program. Further, he continues to support economic recovery efforts by co-chairing the Maui Economic Recovery Commission. Mr. Tokioka has proven to be competent, capable, and effective in

Governor Message 595

Senate Committee Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

February 6, 2024

Page 2

moving DBEDT and the state in a positive direction. The future of Hawaii's economic viability will depend on bold, courageous, and innovative leaders like Mr. Tokioka.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Governor's Message No. 595 and the confirmation of Mr. James "Jimmy" Tokioka.

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 10:31:47 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laurie Choy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. Please support and confirm Mr. Tokioka.

Thank you.

Laurie M. Choy

Isaac W. Choy, CPA, Inc.

**Testimony of Marian Tsuji, Deputy Director for Behavioral Health Administration,  
Department of Health**

**Governor's Message 595**

Confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and  
Tourism, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA

SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, CHAIR

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Hearing Date: February 6, 2024 Room Number: 229

I am writing in my individual capacity in support of the nomination and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka to serve as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Tokioka has a long history of public service including serving as the Deputy Director for the Hawaii State Department of Transportation Airports Division, State Representative for District 15 for 16 years, and Councilmember of the Kauai County Council for 10 years. His experience in the hospitality industry and proven leadership skills is a strong asset to the Department as seen with his collaboration in the Maui Wildfire Response.

I respectfully ask for your consideration of Mr. Tokioka's confirmation as the DBEDT Director. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Testimony of Kathleen Ho, Deputy Director for Environmental Health, Department of Health**

**In SUPPORT of Governor's Message 595**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire at noon on 12-31-2026.

SENATOR LYNN DECOITE, CHAIR

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Hearing Date: February 6, 2024

Room Number: 229

I am writing in my individual capacity in support of the nomination and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka to serve as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Mr. Tokioka has been serving as the DBEDT Director since May 5, 2023. He possesses a long history of public service including serving as the Deputy Director for the Hawaii State Department of Transportation Airports Division, State Representative for District 15 for 16 years, and Councilmember of the Kauai County Council for 10 years. He is experienced in the hospitality industry. His proven leadership skills will be a strong asset to the Department.

Therefore, I respectfully ask for Mr. Tokioka's confirmation as the DBEDT Director. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**JOSH GREEN, M.D.**  
Governor

**SYLVIA LUKE**  
Lt. Governor



**SHARON HURD**  
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

**DEXTER KISHIDA**  
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI  
1428 South King Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96814-2512  
Phone: (808) 973-9600 FAX: (808) 973-9613

**TESTIMONY OF DEXTER KISHIDA  
DEPUTY TO THE CHAIRPERSON**

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024  
2:00 PM  
CONFERENCE ROOM 229 & VIDEOCONFERENCE**

**GOVERNORS MESSAGE NO. 595**

Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Gubernatorial Nominee, James Kunane Tokioka as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT). Mr. Tokioka is a proven leader, passionately serving Hawaii through years as a County councilperson, Representative and as DBEDT director nominee.

Mr. Tokioka has the proven ability to cross multiple sectors of government and the private sector to achieve results. His heart to serve Hawaii's people was recently demonstrated by his deep involvement in the Maui Wildfire response. During the COVID-19 pandemic, and students across the state were to go without meals, Mr. Tokioka led the legislature in a joint letter to Congress and the USDA, urging them to loosen eligibility requirements, ensuring meals could be served to any child in the state safely and efficiently.





Respectfully requesting your vote to confirm his nomination to serve as the Director of DBEDT. He is qualified, well-respected and the right person for the position.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this measure.

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 1:01:32 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janet Ashman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the confirmation of James Tokioka as the Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Thank you.

Trista N. Speer

**LATE**

February 6, 2024, at 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 229

**Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism**

To: The Honorable Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
The Honorable Senator Glenn Waka, Vice Chair  
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

From: Trista N. Speer

Re: **Testimony in Strong Support**  
**GM595, Submitting for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, JAMES TOKIOKA**

Hearing: February 6, 2024, at 2:00 pm  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

I am Trista N. Speer, and I am writing in my personal capacity. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in strong support of James “Jimmy” Tokioka for the position of Director of the Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

I began in my role as Deputy Director of the Department of Human Services on August 1, 2023, and I have had the opportunity to work closely with Jimmy in the wake of the tragic wildfires that occurred on Maui August 8<sup>th</sup> of last year. For the past six months, Jimmy has consistently demonstrated his dedication to the people of Hawaii, and his steadfast approach to identifying innovative and collaborative solutions for the survivors, and his team. Jimmy’s work ethic and integrity has been unwavering, and I strongly support his confirmation.

**LATE**

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 7:40:24 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
K. Piltz	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair DeCoite and Committee Members

I am testifying in strong support of GM595 Consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, Gubernatorial Nominee, James Kunane Tokioka, for a term to expire 12-31-2026.

I have known Mr. Tokioka for a very long time and believe that he has the tools necessary to lead DBEDT. He is well respected and has a lot of experience working in the tourism industry. He has a strong understanding of policy issues and procedures that will help lead the Department on improvements to the State's economy and business environment.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of James Tokioka as Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

Written Statement of  
**Steven Golden, Vice President External Affairs**



**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

February 6, 2023, 2 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

**SUPPORT FOR:**

**G.M. 595 – Consideration and Confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka as the Director of  
Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism**

To: Sen. Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Sen. Glenn Wakai, Vice-Chair  
Members of the Committee

Re: Testimony providing support for GM 595

Aloha Honorable Chair DeCoite, Vice-Chair Wakai, and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to offer support for G.M. 595, for consideration and confirmation of James Kunane Tokioka, Gubernatorial Nominee, as Director of Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism.

I have known Mr. Tokioka for over 25 years beginning with his service as a member of the Kauai County Council, to his long tenure as the State Representative for Legislative District 15 representing p Kauai from Lihue to Wailua. Most recently, I have worked with Mr. Tokioka in his current capacity as he co-chairs the Maui Economic Recovery Commission tasked with providing guidance that will support local recovery priorities that align with the community's vision.

Mr. Tokioka is dedicated to public service and committed to working on behalf of the community he represents. I am confident that he is well qualified for this role and has the temperament to distinguish himself as DEB EDT Director with his understanding off the inner workings of state and county government, and his business experience in the restaurant and hospitality industries.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of the Senate's confirmation for Mr. Tokioka's appointment to serve as Director of Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. I respectfully request your Committee's passage of GM 595.

**LATE**

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 2/5/2024 9:39:19 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Faylene Mahina Duarte	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism,

I wish to express my full support of Gubernatorial Nominee, Mr. James Kunane Tokioka to serve Hawai'i as its Director of the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism. As a private citizen, I have observed Mr. Tokioka as a highly skilled and experienced leader who works collaboratively and decisively for the people of Hawai'i.

Mr. Tokioka does not shy away from the tough and thorny issues and have observed him first hand leaning into complex situations to diagnose and solve problems with his peers; across other state departments and county agencies, and with community subject matter experts.

Furthermore, Mr. Tokioka has a proven track record and experience to support his nomination. I fully support the nomination of James Kunane Tokioka, without reservation.

Me ka mahalo,

Mahina Paishon

Private Citizen

**LATE**

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 6:44:40 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
John R. Gordines	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Jimmy Tokioka is well qualified for the position.

**LATE**

**GM-595**

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 8:31:01 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cynthia Y H Derosier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in strong support of the Governors nomination of **James Kunane Tokioka** as Director of Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT).

Mr. Tokioka is well equipped for the position and under his leadership over 100 state, county and community leaders have come together to collaboratively develop plans to rebuild Maui's economy in the aftermath of the disastrous fires.

Mr. Tokioka has been nimble and responsive and since his **nomination as DBEDT director on May 5th, he has been deeply involved in Maui wildfire response and recovery efforts. Including**

- - Co-leading the Joint Housing Task Force to relocate more than 5,000 survivors from evacuation shelters into West Maui hotels and vacation rental units in 13 days
  - Overseeing the launch of the Hawai'i Fire Relief Housing Program which placed over 600 families into temporary housing
  - Co-chairing the Maui Economic Recovery Commission tasked with providing guidance that will support local recovery priorities that align with the community's vision

As a community builder and Strategic Planning Facilitator I know how difficult it can be to bring diverse groups together. Mr. Tokioka has the essential skills and resources to achieve the hefty work ahead. He has already built strong and productive relationships across the spectrum of leaders in Hawaii from community and government agencies at the federal, state, and county levels, as well as with private organizations- and is committed to bringing everyone together for our state and people's best interests.

Rebuilding Lahaina is a long-term process, and re-establishing a robust economy in Maui and throughout our state requires steady leadership and a united strategic effort throughout our Community. Mr. Tokioka has set a course of action and is well on his way in uniting efforts and aligning critical stakeholders to rebuild our economy, drive economic development and support local businesses throughout our state. A shift in leadership at this time would critically damage the foundation he has built and no other person is better equipped to see this work through.



Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Cynthia Y.H. Derosier  
CEO , The Good Juju co.  
Strategy and Planning  
Graphic Facilitator, Meeting Design

**LATE**

February 5, 2024

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM  
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair

HEARING DATE: Tuesday, February 6, 2024  
TIME: 2:00 PM  
PLACE: Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

RE: GM 595 – SUPPORT for JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA, for consideration and confirmation as the Director, Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Committee Members,

I am writing in support of Interim Director James Tokioka's confirmation as Director of the Department of Business Economic Development and Tourism, for a term to expire 12-31-26. Mr. Tokioka has an established career in public service including both as an elected official on the Kauai County Council and in the state legislature, plus in an administrative capacity. In addition to his public service, he has worked in the hospitality industry spanning from entry level to senior management to owner, including over a decade experience in business management with a large national corporation. He brings broad experience to DBEDT's top post, with a critical understanding that public/private partnerships and community engagement are key to sustainable economic development.

As a neighbor islander working in economic development, we are pleased to see a fellow neighbor islander leading DBEDT. Mr. Tokioka has seen first-hand the unique economic challenges and untapped and under-resourced opportunities to diversify and strengthen our neighbor island economies, while ensuring that the communities have a leadership voice in those economic development priorities. As an example, Mr. Tokioka is co-chairing, along with Maui County Mayor's Office of Economic Development Director Luana Mahi, the Maui Economic Recovery Council (ERC), of which I am honored to serve. His introductory remarks to the ERC stated that the voices of Maui will lead recovery strategy, we are here to support. We need this state/county collaboration as we face the greatest challenges of our lifetime.

Mr. Tokioka shares our values of building an inclusive economy which creates shared economic prosperity. Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,



Leslie Wilkins, President & CEO  
Maui Economic Development Board  
1305 N. Holopono Street, Suite 1  
Kihei, HI 96753  
Mobile: 808-280-0376/Email: leslie@medb.org