



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
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Statement of
James Kunane Tokioka
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, April 11, 2024
Time 11:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423

In consideration of
SCR145 SDI
REQUESTING STAKEHOLDERS TO UPDATE THE EAST-WEST CENTER STUDY
TITLED "HAWAII AS AN EAST-WEST BRIDGE: A SURVEY OF THE ECONOMIC
VALUE OF NON-TOURIST INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN HAWAII".

Chair Holt and Vice-Chair Lamosao, and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT) offers comments on SCR 145 SDI that requests stakeholders to update the East-West Center Study titled "Hawaii As An East-West Bridge: A Survey Of The Economic Value Of Non-Tourist International Activities In Hawaii".

Non-tourist international activities play a major role in Hawaii's economy. These activities take the form of educational exchanges, conferences, seminars, sporting events, sister state relations, cultural exchanges, training, defense related events, and other activities. However, these activities are also counted as tourism events given the limited stay of participants involved.

These activities build upon our existing assets of being a multi-cultural, multi-racial community and our strength of location in the Pacific region related to military

affairs, relations with the islands of the Pacific, and Pacific-oriented government and diplomatic activities.

DBEDT estimates that it would take between \$60,000-\$75,000 to conduct such a study.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

**Testimony of Suzanne P. Vares-Lum
President, East-West Center**

House Committee on Economic Development

Thursday, April 11, 2024

SCR145

Requesting stakeholders to update the East-West Center study titled “Hawai‘i as an East-West bridge: a survey of the economic value of non-tourist international activities in Hawai‘i”.

Dear Chair Holt, Vice Chair Lamosao, and members of the House Economic Development Committee:

Mahalo for this opportunity for the East-West Center to provide testimony in **support** of SCR145 introduced by Senator Chris Lee. As an institution established by the US Congress in 1960, the East-West Center promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia, and the Pacific through cooperative study, research, and dialogue.

The updated study would serve as a beacon of insight into the diverse economic contributions beyond tourism that Hawai‘i offers to the global community. However, in the face of evolving economic landscapes and geopolitical dynamics in the Indo-Pacific, it is imperative that we ensure the data and analysis provided remain current and reflective of present realities.

Furthermore, updating this study will enable us to adapt to emerging trends, engage in new opportunities, and address evolving challenges, helping to ensure Hawai‘i’s resilience and competitiveness in the global arena. The East-West Center recommends that funding be appropriated to ensure the ability to convene stakeholders and move forward with updating this important resource.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on SCR145. We look forward to our continued collaboration with the Hawai‘i State Legislature in elevating Hawai‘i as a bridge between East and West.