

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

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
Senate Committee on Higher Education
Tuesday, April 2, 2024

SR123/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”.

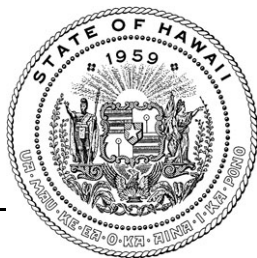
Dear Chair DeCoite, Chair Mercado Kim, Vice Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Kidani, and members of the Senate Committees on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism, and Higher Education:

Mahalo for this opportunity for the East-West Center to provide testimony in **support** of SR123/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 SR123/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.



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

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

Statement of
James Kunane Tokioka
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEES
ON
ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM
AND
HIGHER EDUCATION

Tuesday, April 02, 2024
Time 1:00PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
SCR145/SR123
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".

Chairs DeCoite and Kim, Vice-Chairs Wakai and Kidani, and members of the Committees. The Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism (DBEDT) supports **SCR 145/ SR 123** 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.

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 \$200,000 to conduct such a study.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



CARES

A GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT

LATE

Dear Chairs, Vice Chairs & the EET and HRE Committee members,

Hawaii is a premiere destination. The East West center was created in 1960 by Congress to grow healthy diplomatic ties with the East & West nations to foster cooperation, training & research. International economic activity draws in income from abroad. The research studies non-tourist international activity in Hawaii such as high technology, filmmaking industry, fashion design, fish & candy imports, aquaculture & agricultural research.

Hawaii is also an international arts & culture destination with racially diverse ethnic minority groups and premiere cultural museums. The strategic goals outlined in the study are similar to the strategic goals in Hawaii Tourism Authority's Destination Management Action Plan which rebuilds, redefines & resets the direction of tourism to focus on cultural resources & sustainable tourism. Although East West Center's focus is non-tourist activity, the study should consider the strategies outlined in HTA's DMAP to enhance cultural diversity & economic activity which will further strengthen foreign markets within the State while providing diversified economic advantages as well as creating strong international ties with other nations. These goals will be advantageous in improving quality of life while improving visitor experience.

Blessings,

CARES

SCR-145

Submitted on: 3/27/2024 6:19:45 PM

Testimony for EET on 4/2/2024 1:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Julia Estigoy-Kahoonei	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

If this will help reduce the impact of tourism and promote more native culture and the protection of all things indigenous, I support it