



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

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Monday, February 24, 2025
10:00 a.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 308

In consideration of
HB1391, HD1
RELATING TO TRADE.

Chair Yamashita, Vice Chair Takenouchi, and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) offers comments on **HB1391, HD1** which establishes the Hawaii-Ireland trade commission within DBEDT.

Such a commission could help identify trade opportunities and provide a pathway to bring these opportunities with Ireland to fruition. Areas of economic development, educational opportunities for students and academics, energy, governance, and the sharing of knowledge regarding global concerns could be pursued.

This program will significantly contribute to Hawaii's role and position in international affairs, and align with Hawaii's goals in economic development, international relations and education.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 8:12:38 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

I don't want my tax dollars going to an eleven member commission to collaborate with Ireland, even if funded indirectly.

How long after the passage of this bill will we see taxpayer funded Commission trips to Ireland?

Focus on Hawaii's problems!

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:02:53 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Karissa Fuller	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,

I am writing to express my **strong opposition** to House Bill 1391, which proposes the establishment of a Hawaii-Ireland Trade Commission within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism. While fostering international relations is generally beneficial, this particular initiative raises several concerns regarding its fiscal responsibility and relevance to Hawaii's economic interests.

Fiscal Responsibility: The creation of a new commission entails administrative costs, including staffing, operational expenses, and potential travel between Hawaii and Ireland. Given our state's current budget constraints, allocating taxpayer dollars to a commission with questionable return on investment is imprudent. These funds could be more effectively utilized in areas directly impacting Hawaii residents, such as education, healthcare, or infrastructure.

Geographical and Economic Relevance: Ireland, located in the Atlantic Ocean, is geographically distant from Hawaii. Our state's primary trade partners are typically within the Pacific Rim, where logistical considerations and existing economic ties make trade more feasible and beneficial. Focusing on a trade relationship with Ireland does not align with Hawaii's strategic economic interests and may divert attention from more pertinent opportunities.

Timing and Legislative Priorities: The introduction of this bill appears to be a last-minute attempt by the current administration to allocate funds before potential policy changes. Such hasty legislative actions can lead to poorly conceived programs that lack thorough vetting and long-term planning. It is crucial that our government prioritizes initiatives that offer clear, immediate benefits to our community.

Alternative Considerations: Rather than establishing a new commission, Hawaii could explore strengthening existing trade relationships within the Asia-Pacific region, where cultural, economic, and logistical factors are more closely aligned with our state's interests. Additionally, investing in local businesses and industries would have a more direct and positive impact on Hawaii's economy.

In conclusion, while international trade is an important aspect of economic development, **House Bill 1391 does not represent a fiscally responsible or strategically sound approach for**

Hawaii. I urge you to oppose this bill and consider more effective avenues for promoting our state's economic well-being.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Karissa Fuller

Hau'ula, Oahu

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:03:11 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Cheryl Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am opposed to HB1391. We do not need a Hawaii Ireland trade commission. This is just another way to pad government and spend taxpayer money unnecessarily .

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/23/2025 9:22:01 PM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Candace Vizcarra	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is obviously misappropriation of tax payers dollars!! Hard pass...stop this unnecessary spending! GOD KNOWS & SEES ALL!!

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 12:13:54 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvonne Alvarado	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I, Yvonne Alvarado Strongly Oppose to Bill HB1391 HD1

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 1:39:21 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Debbie Wyand	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

No.....just no. This s a waste of tax payer money. Focus on Hawaii.

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 7:53:37 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Yvonne Galoia	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Another useless bill that does not help the cost of living in Hawaii. It has not explained how relationships with Ireland will improve the betterment of Hawaii citizens. We don't even have a good relationship with our own government with other states and you want to spend money to expand to Ireland? I oppose this bill

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 8:06:06 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Laurie Anne Bell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this as it in no way helps our citizens.

We need to focus on Hawaii.

America 1st-

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 9:03:38 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dorinda Ohelo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill. This has no place in state and local government. NONE of our taxpayer dollars should go towards this at all.

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:30:20 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Paul Littleton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB1391

HB-1391-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/24/2025 10:33:56 AM

Testimony for FIN on 2/24/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Alex Akui	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We should not be paying for this. Strongly oppose