



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

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Statement of  
**JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA**  
Director  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM**

Thursday, April 10, 2025  
1:01 PM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of  
**HCR102, HD1**  
**STRONGLY URGING THE REAL ESTATE COMMISSION TO ALLOW FOR THE  
ADMINISTRATION OF THE REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S EXAMINATION IN  
THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE FOR PURPOSES OF ISSUING A LIMITED REAL  
ESTATE SALESPERSON'S LICENSE, FOR THE SALE OF TIMESHARE PRODUCTS  
IN HAWAII, TO JAPANESE NATIONAL VISITORS FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
ENHANCING JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN AND SUPPORT OF THE HAWAII  
TOURISM INDUSTRY.**

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

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism ("DBEDT") is pleased to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of both HCR102, HD1, urging the Real Estate Commission to allow for the administration of the real estate salesperson's examinations in the Japanese language for purposes of issuing a full real estate salesperson's license, limited to the sale of timeshare products in Hawaii, to promote the sale of these products to Japanese-speaking visitor and enhance Japan's involvement and support in the Hawaii tourism industry.

DBEDT supports administering the real estate examination in Japanese which will increase the passage rate for Japanese-speaking applicants. Japan visitors have traditionally represented a substantial portion of travelers to the State. Currently, Hawaii's tourism industry is yet to see a return of Japanese visitor market due to the wildfires and the current weakness of the yen. This pilot program will result in increased visitor counts from Japan to Hawaii and stimulate economic activity for the State. Furthermore, the pilot program will ensure there are sufficient sales associates to meet the demand when Japanese visitors return.

Moreover, the pilot program will have an immense impact on the timeshare industry which entitles members to all of the benefits of owning a vacation home without the responsibilities of traditional home ownership. Hawaii's timeshare industry is economically resilient as timeshare owners have made a long-term commitment to Hawaii by purchasing and owning real property. These owners are consistent and dependable visitors who bring substantial tax dollars to Hawaii and continue to come even during periods of economic downturn.

Mahalo for your consideration of this request which will directly support Hawaii's tourism industry, stimulate economic growth, and tax revenue generation.



April 8, 2025

TO: Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Economic Development & Tourism Committee

FR: AMERICAN RESORT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION – HAWAII (ARDA-Hawaii)

RE: **HCR 102, HD 1 - STRONGLY URGING THE REAL ESTATE COMMISSION TO ALLOW FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S EXAMINATION IN THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE FOR PURPOSES OF ISSUING A LIMITED REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S LICENSE, FOR THE SALE OF TIMESHARE PRODUCTS IN HAWAII, TO JAPANESE NATIONAL VISITORS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENHANCING JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN AND SUPPORT OF THE HAWAII TOURISM INDUSTRY.**

**Hearing date: Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 1:01 p.m.**

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Economic Development & Tourism Committee,

ARDA-Hawaii is the local chapter of the trade association for the timeshare industry. There are currently 98 resorts and more than 15,000 timeshare units throughout Hawaii. ARDA-Hawaii hereby submits testimony in **STRONG SUPPORT of HCR 102, HD 1 STRONGLY URGING THE REAL ESTATE COMMISSION TO ALLOW FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S EXAMINATION IN THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE FOR PURPOSES OF ISSUING A LIMITED REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S LICENSE, FOR THE SALE OF TIMESHARE PRODUCTS IN HAWAII, TO JAPANESE NATIONAL VISITORS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENHANCING JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN AND SUPPORT OF THE HAWAII TOURISM INDUSTRY.**

ARDA-Hawaii strongly supports the HCR 102, HD 1 to allow the real estate examination for the issuance of a salesperson's license to be administered in the Japanese language, and that, upon passage of the exam by the applicant, the Commission issue a license that would be limited to the sale of timeshare interests only, and for no other type of activity (i.e., residential, or commercial property management, condominium management and residential sales).

Based on experience in other jurisdictions, ARDA—Hawaii believes that if adopted, this will increase the passage rate for Japanese-speaking applicants, which will, in turn, result in increased visitor counts from Japan to Hawaii.

Timeshare owners have made a long-term commitment to Hawaii by purchasing and owning real property in the State, significantly supporting our economy. These owners are consistent and dependable visitors who bring substantial tax dollars to the State and continue to come even during periods of economic downturn. Indeed, historical averages for timeshare occupancy hovers around 90%, significantly outpacing traditional lodging. Over time, timeshare owners become part of the fabric of our local community as they return year after year. Since they are owners, they continue to visit the islands even during challenging times. We witnessed this during prior natural disasters and economic downturns such as Hurricane `Iniki (1992) and recovery periods following the COVID pandemic (2020) and the devastating 2023 Maui Wildfires. Timeshare is an economically resilient industry.

A large majority of buyers are from Japan. HCR 102, HD1 would promote the sale of these products to the Japanese market and enhance Hawaii's tourism industry. Hawaii's tourism industry as a whole has not yet seen a complete return of the Japanese visitor market to our islands following the wildfires and also due to the current weakness of the yen. This has proven challenging for our economy, especially on our neighbor islands.

HCR 102, HD 1 helps to directly address an issue that is hindering the return of Japanese visitors. It has been difficult to hire and license enough sales associates to meet the demand of the Japanese market. Enabling additional salespersons to take a real estate license in Japanese and the corresponding increase in passage rate would facilitate an increase in Japanese visitors back to the islands, particularly with the new development on the horizon. This support allows Hawaii to continue with the recovery of our visitor industry as we seek to rebuild Lahaina and other parts of West Maui.

Chapter 467 of the Hawaii Revised States gives the Commission broad authority to issue licenses on a conditional basis. As proposed, HCR 102, HD 1 would encourage the Commission to permit the administration of real estate license examinations in Japanese and, in turn, promote the continued growth of the tourism industry in Hawaii.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to having a more detailed conversation and answering any questions the Commission may have.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,



Justin J. Vermuth  
ARDA Hawaii

April 8, 2025

TO: Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair  
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Economic Development & Tourism Committee

FR: AMERICAN RESORT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION – HAWAII (MVWC)

RE: **HCR 102, HD 1 - STRONGLY URGING THE REAL ESTATE COMMISSION TO ALLOW FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S EXAMINATION IN THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE FOR PURPOSES OF ISSUING A LIMITED REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S LICENSE, FOR THE SALE OF TIMESHARE PRODUCTS IN HAWAII, TO JAPANESE NATIONAL VISITORS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENHANCING JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN AND SUPPORT OF THE HAWAII TOURISM INDUSTRY.**

**Hearing date: Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 1:01 p.m.**

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Economic Development & Tourism Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of Marriott Vacations Worldwide Corporation ("MVWC") in **STRONG SUPPORT of HCR 102, HD 1 STRONGLY URGING THE REAL ESTATE COMMISSION TO ALLOW FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S EXAMINATION IN THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE FOR PURPOSES OF ISSUING A LIMITED REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S LICENSE, FOR THE SALE OF TIMESHARE PRODUCTS IN HAWAII, TO JAPANESE NATIONAL VISITORS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENHANCING JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN AND SUPPORT OF THE HAWAII TOURISM INDUSTRY.**

MVWC strongly supports the HCR 102, HD 1 to allow the real estate examination for the issuance of a salesperson's license to be administered in the Japanese language, and that, upon passage of the exam by the applicant, the Commission issue a license that would be limited to the sale of timeshare interests only, and for no other type of activity (i.e., residential, or commercial property management, condominium management and residential sales). MVWC believes that if adopted, this will increase the passage rate for Japanese-speaking applicants, which will, in turn, result in increased visitor counts from Japan to Hawaii.

Timeshare owners have made a long-term commitment to Hawaii by purchasing and owning real property in the State, significantly supporting our economy. These owners are consistent and dependable visitors who bring substantial tax dollars to the State and continue to

come even during periods of economic downturn. Indeed, historical averages for timeshare occupancy hovers around 90%, significantly outpacing traditional lodging. Over time, timeshare owners become part of the fabric of our local community as they return year after year. Since they are owners, they continue to visit the islands even during challenging times.

HCR 102, HD1 would promote the sale of these products to the Japanese market and enhance Hawaii's tourism industry. Hawaii's tourism industry as a whole has not yet seen a complete return of the Japanese visitor market to our islands following the wildfires and also due to the current weakness of the yen. HCR 102, HD 1 helps to directly address an issue that is hindering the return of Japanese visitors. It has been difficult to hire and license enough sales associates to meet the demand of the Japanese market. Enabling additional salespersons to take a real estate license in Japanese and the corresponding increase in passage rate would facilitate an increase in Japanese visitors back to the islands, particularly with the new development on the horizon. This support allows Hawaii to continue with the recovery of our visitor industry as we seek to rebuild Lahaina and other parts of West Maui.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to having a more detailed conversation and answering any questions the Commission may have.

Mahalo for your consideration,

Robin Suarez  
Senior Vice President & Associate General Counsel  
Marriott Vacations Worldwide Corporation

## **Testimony of the Real Estate Commission**

**Before the  
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
Thursday, April 10, 2025  
1:01 p.m.  
Conference Room 229 and Videoconference**

**On the following measure:**

**H.C.R. 102, H.D. 1, STRONGLY URGING THE REAL ESTATE COMMISSION TO ALLOW FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S EXAMINATION IN THE JAPANESE LANGUAGE FOR PURPOSES OF ISSUING A LIMITED REAL ESTATE SALESPERSON'S LICENSE, FOR THE SALE OF TIMESHARE PRODUCTS IN HAWAII, TO JAPANESE NATIONAL VISITORS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENHANCING JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN AND SUPPORT OF THE HAWAII TOURISM INDUSTRY.**

Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee:

My name is Derrick Yamane, and I am the Chairperson of the Hawai'i Real Estate Commission ("Commission"). The Commission opposes this resolution.

The purpose of this resolution is to urge the Commission to allow for the administration of the real estate salesperson's examination in the Japanese language for purposes of issuing a real estate license limited only for the sale of timeshare products in Hawaii.

At its August 23, 2024 meeting, the Commission considered a similar request from Hilton Grand Vacations. After a full discussion and consideration, the Commission voted unanimously to deny the request for administering the real estate examination in Japanese.

The Commission appreciates the visitors to the state and the benefits they create. Still, the Commission's purpose as stated in Hawaii Revised Statutes section 467-4, is "the protection of the general public in its real estate transactions," and creating a Japanese language examination may create additional concerns that will need to be addressed for the public's continued protection, such as: (1) the Regulated Industries Complaints Office (RICO) does not have sufficient Japanese language resources to assist complainants; (2) the Principal Broker's duty to oversee a limited licensee who more than likely only understands Japanese; (3) will a timeshare reseller have the resources to properly oversee the conduct of the limited licensee; (4) will a

limited licensee applicant understand and pass the mandatory pre-licensing education;  
and (5) that the 20 hours of mandatory continuing education classes are offered only in English.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.C.R. 102, H.D. 1.