



March 25, 2025

TO: HONORABLE SCOT MATAYOSHI, CHAIR, HONORABLE CORY CHUN,
VICE CHAIR, COMMITTEE ON LABOR.

SUBJECT: **SUPPORT OF S.B. 1402 SD1 HD1, RELATING TO VESSELS IN STATE
COMMERCIAL HARBORS.** Clarifies that the requirements for the securing of
mooring lines in state commercial harbors shall not apply to certain vessels.

HEARING

DATE: Tuesday, March 25, 2025
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
PLACE: Capitol Room 329

Dear Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun and Members of the Committees,

The General Contractors Association of Hawaii (GCA) is an organization comprised of approximately five hundred (500) general contractors, subcontractors, and construction related firms. The GCA was established in 1932 and is the largest construction association in the State of Hawaii. Our mission is to elevate Hawaii's construction industry and strengthen the foundation of our community.

GCA **SUPPORTS** S.B. 1402 SD1 HD1, which clarifies that the requirements for the securing of mooring lines in state commercial harbors shall not apply to certain vessels.

The GCA supports this measure as it corrects an unintended consequence and aligns the law to the capture the original intent of the measure.

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

Aloha Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Tony Coscia, and I am writing in strong opposition to SB 1402, which seeks to require that the securing of mooring lines in state commercial harbors be performed exclusively by labor subject to collective bargaining. This bill would have serious unintended consequences for Hawaii's commercial tour boat industry, which has safely and effectively managed its own mooring operations for decades. I am here today respectfully asking tour operators to be exempt from this bill.

Tour operators throughout Hawaii have well-established training programs, ensuring that captains and crew are highly skilled in securing mooring lines as part of their daily operations. These businesses operate under strict safety protocols and have a proven track record of doing so without incident. The proposed mandate would disrupt well-functioning operations, adding unnecessary costs, logistical challenges, and even safety risks.

Key Concerns:

1. **Failure to Include Tour Operators Creates an Unnecessary Burden**

While the bill exempts certain vessel categories, it does not account for commercial tour operators, who have demonstrated their ability to safely and efficiently manage their own mooring procedures. The omission of this exemption unfairly impacts an industry that has already invested in proper training and safety protocols.

2. **Disruptions to Business Operations and Customer Experience**

Tour operators rely on well-timed schedules to accommodate passengers efficiently. Adding an external labor requirement for mooring could create delays, reduce operational flexibility, and negatively impact the customer experience. Unlike large shipping operations, tour vessels often need to dock and depart multiple times per day, requiring adaptability that this bill would restrict.

3. **Increased Costs on Small Businesses**

Many of Hawaii's tour boat operators are small, locally owned businesses that would struggle to absorb the added expense of hiring third-party labor for mooring tasks. These costs could ultimately be passed on to consumers, making tours less accessible to both residents and visitors.

4. **Critical Safety Risks During Kona Lows and Storm Events**

During winter months and severe weather conditions, including Kona lows, vessel operators must adjust lines, reposition vessels, or turn boats around quickly to prevent damage and ensure safety. Relying on outside labor instead of our trained crews could cause dangerous delays, putting both vessels and personnel at risk. The ability to act immediately in response to changing harbor conditions is essential, and removing that control from vessel operators jeopardizes safety.

5. **No Justification for Regulatory Overreach**

There is no evidence that the current system is unsafe or in need of change. Tour operators have successfully handled mooring duties as part of their standard crew responsibilities without any history of significant safety issues. Mandating external labor



for these tasks is an unnecessary and burdensome government intervention into a system that is already working.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to reconsider the impacts of SB 1402 on Hawaii's commercial tour boat industry. If the intent of this bill is to enhance safety and efficiency, then tour operators—who have a long history of upholding both—should be exempted, just as other maritime sectors have been.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. I respectfully ask for your opposition to SB 1402 in its current form.

Sincerely,
Tony Coscia





March 24 , 2025

Testimony in Support of

SB1402(SD1/HD1)

Aloha Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Hawaii Longline Association (HLA), this testimony is in support of SB1402(SD1/HD1). HLA members include 150 active longline vessels based exclusively out of Honolulu Harbor as well as the United Fishing Agency (Honolulu Fish Auction). We understand that the intent of last year's mooring lines legislation was not to apply to fishing vessels and thus we are appreciative that SB1402(SD1/HD1) will remedy the omission of fishing vessels from list of exempted vessel types.

Hawaii longline vessels are considered small vessels with the average size being 72 ft in length and less than 200 gross tons. Hawaii longline vessels are easily maneuverable and typically use 2-3 mooring lines when tying up in port. Collectively the fleet makes over 1,500 fishing (round) trips per year as well as several thousand movements collectively within Honolulu Harbor during normal fish offloading and berthing procedures.

Last year's legislation on this matter exempted several types of vessels much larger than Hawaii longline vessels including those involved in shipyard repairs, construction, and maritime research.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony in support of SB1402(SD1/HD1).

Mahalo

Eric K. Kingma, Ph.D.
Executive Director