



Statement of
Michael P. Matsumoto, President/CEO
SSFM International, Inc.
before the
House Committee on Economic Development and Technology

Wednesday, March 12, 2025
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SB989 SD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Dear Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology:

SSFM International, Inc. supports SB989 SD1 that appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai'i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

SSFM International, Inc. was established in the State of Hawaii in 1959 providing professional project management, planning, engineering services. In addition to providing a variety of professional services a multitude of local government agencies and private sector clients, we have engaged many small business architectural-engineering companies in Hawaii for our contracts. We understand, therefore, the benefits that supporting local small businesses has on our community.

Respectfully submitted,

SSFM INTERNATIONAL, INC.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Michael P. Matsumoto'.

Michael P. Matsumoto, PE, SE, FACEC
President/CEO
email: mmatsumoto@ssfm.com

koolaudistillery.com

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tel 808 261 0685 **905** Kalaniana'ole Highway,
Unit 5014, Kailua, HI 96734

March 8, 2025

To: House Committee on Economic Development and Technology

From: Eric Dill, KO'OLAU Distillery

Subject: SB989 Support of HTDC

KO'OLAU Distillery supports SB989 SD1 that appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

Funds will be used to understand and implement cutting edge tools to address Hawaii's unique challenges and focus on new opportunities to grow Hawaii's locally made products. Empowering local manufacturing businesses with additional resources will help foster innovation and economic growth which will lead to thriving sectors of Hawaii's manufacturing industry. Value-added product development, renewable energy, and fashion are some of the industries that could provide the State with new economic growth.

HTDC has been a critical component in the success and growth of Ko'olau Distillery, providing essential grants, resources, and educational support that have directly contributed to our resilience and expansion. As a small business in Hawaii's manufacturing sector, we faced significant challenges during the economic downturn caused by COVID-19, particularly in a state heavily reliant on tourism. The financial assistance and business development programs offered by HTDC enabled us to adapt, sustain operations, and continue to innovate during an incredibly difficult period. Without this support, many local businesses, including ours, would have struggled to survive the disruptions in supply chains, shifts in consumer behavior, and restrictions on commerce.

HTDC's impact goes beyond immediate financial assistance—it has made Ko'olau Distillery a stronger, more resilient company, better equipped to navigate economic fluctuations and industry challenges. The resources provided by HTDC have helped us optimize operations, implement new technologies, and enhance workforce training, all of which have directly contributed to our long-term stability and sustained growth. Over the past four years, we have consistently achieved over 20% growth annually, and HTDC has been a key factor in that success. The continued availability of HTDC programs and funding opportunities is vital for businesses like ours to remain



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competitive, expand local manufacturing, and contribute to Hawai'i's broader economic diversification.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Best Regards,

Eric Dill, CEO



AI.FISH

Ai.Fish
Kailua, HI
<http://www.ai.fish>

Statement of
Jimmy Freese
CEO
Ai.Fish
before the
House Committee on Economic Development & Technology

Wednesday, March 12, 2025
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SB989 SD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology.

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology.

Ai.Fish supports SB989 SD1 that appropriates funds to the Hawai`i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai`i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

The programs run by HTDC have been extremely valuable for us to be a worldwide competitive local startup based in Hawaii. In the current AI space, things are extremely competitive and for us to stay a thriving company based in Hawaii the support from HTDC is instrumental.



AI.FISH

Ai.Fish
Kailua, HI
<http://www.ai.fish>

Mahalo,

Jimmy Freese

Co-Founder and CEO
Ai.Fish





**T E N
T O M O R R O W**

Statement of
Summer Shiigi
Owner
Ten Tomorrow
before the

House Committee on Economic Development and Technology

Wednesday, March 12, 2025
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SB989 SD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology.

Ten Tomorrow **supports** SB989 SD1 that appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai'i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

We are a modern women's clothing brand here in Honolulu. Our business has been a graduate of the Innovate Hawaii incubator program, a recipient of the MAP grant, and we've attended several of the programs HTDC provides to small businesses. This is our 10th year in business and as we reflect on our progress, we wouldn't still be here today without the assistance that HTDC has given us. We've specifically used grant monies to invest in technological software, training, and equipment that have since made our manufacturing process faster, more streamlined, and allowed us to increase what we can offer to our customers.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Sincerely,

Summer Shiigi
Owner
Ten Tomorrow

SB-989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/10/2025 10:31:28 AM

Testimony for ECD on 3/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Chenoa Farnsworth	Blue Startups, LLC	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Blue Startups supports SB989 SD1 that appropriates funds for HTDC’s core programs: the Manufacturing Assistance Program (MAP), Hawai‘i Small Business Innovation Research (HSBIR), and Accelerator & Small Business Training programs. HTDC core programs develop infrastructure, capital, and talent to facilitate the development of technology and manufacturing jobs in Hawai‘i. Following their mission, HTDC programs aim to provide programmatic business, technical, and financial support for innovative small businesses from the startup stage through growth and export.

Blue Startups benefits from the accelerator funding provided by HTDC. Without HTDC funding, we would not be able to provide the support for our technology based companies in Hawaii. We believe strongly that we need to grow the technology sector in Hawaii in order to provide high paying jobs in the future. To date, Blue Startups has supported 131 companies through its 12-week mentorship program. Those companies have gone on to attract over \$1 billion in funding and created over 1000 jobs.

Statement of
Nelson Kanemoto
President & CEO
Referentia Systems
before the
House Committee on Economic Development and Technology

Wednesday, March 12, 2025
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SB989 SD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology.

Referentia Systems **supports** SB989 SD1 that appropriates funds to the Hawai`i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai`i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

Referentia Systems is a technology company with headquarters in Honolulu, Hawaii. Referentia Systems has received great support from HTDC including the HSBIR program. Over the past 16 years, HTDC's HSBIR grant funding has supported and enabled Referentia to develop intellectual property (IP) that are being commercialized within the State and on the U.S. mainland through a technology spin-off process.

The support and augmented funding from HTDC for HSBIR has helped our local small business to compete through marketing, the commercialization of HSBIR technologies and has positioned Referentia to secure large military contracts and commercialize its IP.



Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.



Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation

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JOSH GREEN M.D

GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE

LT. GOVERNOR

Written Statement of
Sandi Kanemori
Interim Executive Director
Hawaii Technology Development Corporation
before the
House Committee On Economic Development & Technology
Wednesday, March 12, 2025
10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 423 & Videoconference
In consideration of
SB989, SD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee.

The Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) supports **SB989, SD1** that appropriates funds to the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC was established in 1983 with the mission of supporting and fostering innovation and driving economic development in Hawai'i. HTDC has a proven track record of supporting manufacturing and technology-driven initiatives across various industries in Hawai'i.

HTDC programs will be able to leverage its State and Federal networks of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advance technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai'i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will leverage the use of funds to provide small- to medium-sized businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market. HTDC will also support local businesses supporting Hawai'i's tourism sector to leverage and use technology tools like e-commerce, mobile applications, and virtual services to reduce operational costs and increase sales.

HTDC believes this new initiative will result in positive economic development value for the State of Hawai'i. We support this provided it doesn't replace or adversely impact administrative priorities in the Executive Budget. Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.



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Executive Officers

Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Chair*
Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Vice Chair*
Jayson Watts, Mahi Pono, *Secretary/Treasurer*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *Executive Director*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Advisor*
Gary Okimoto, Safeway, *Immediate Past Chair*

TO: Committee on Economic Development and Technology

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: March 12, 2025

TIME: 10:00am

RE: SB989 SD1 Relating to Economic Development

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

HFIA is in support of this measure. As the measure notes HTDC has successfully facilitated numerous projects funded by the State and ensured effective use of state resources with a proven track record of fostering innovation and economic diversification through state-funded initiatives, demonstrating expertise in administering grants, supporting start-ups, promoting public-private partnerships, empowering local businesses, and driving economic progress. HTDC's expertise spans a wide range of industries, enabling the effective implementation of cutting-edge technologies tailored to Hawaii's unique challenges and opportunities. HTDC is the ideal partner to assist small businesses with technology enablement and ensure that our local businesses have the technological resources they need to grow and thrive.

We encourage the Committee to pass this measure and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.



MAUI

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOICE OF BUSINESS

HEARING BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TECHNOLOGY
HAWAII STATE CAPITOL, HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM 423
Wednesday, March 12, 2025 AT 10:00 A.M.

To The Honorable Greggor Ilagan, Chair
The Honorable Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair
Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology

SUPPORT SB989 SD1 RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Maui Chamber of Commerce wholeheartedly **SUPPORTS SB989 SD1** which appropriates funds to the Hawaii Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses, including those related to the tourism sector, with technology enablement.

The Chamber agrees that the tourism sector, a cornerstone of the state's economy, is highly seasonal and vulnerable to global economic shifts, natural disasters, and pandemics. These factors leave small businesses with inconsistent revenue streams and heightened risks. These compounded pressures have forced many small enterprises to operate with razor-thin margins, making resilience and adaptability essential for survival.

Furthermore, we agree that technology adoption is crucial for small businesses in Hawai'i, particularly those in the tourism sector, to overcome these challenges and remain competitive in an increasingly digital marketplace. Leveraging digital tools such as booking systems, online marketing platforms, and data analytics can help reduce costs, expand market reach, and enhance customer attraction and retention while improving the overall visitor experience. Technology also mitigates the risks of geographic isolation by enabling remote work, virtual services, and e-commerce opportunities.

Supporting small businesses in adopting technology ensures their ability to innovate and adapt, strengthening their resilience and contributing to the long-term economic sustainability of Hawai'i's communities.

For these reasons we **SUPPORT SB989 SD1**.

Sincerely,

Pamela Tumpap
President

To advance and promote a healthy economic environment for business, advocating for a responsive government and quality education, while preserving Maui's unique community characteristics.



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March 12, 2025

HEARING BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

TESTIMONY ON SB 989, SD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Conference Room 423 & Videoconference
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Ilagan, Vice-Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate, and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SB 989, SD1, which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) to assist small businesses with technology enablement. This measure is an important step toward enhancing the economic sustainability of Hawai'i's small businesses, including those in agriculture and agritourism, by providing them with the tools needed to compete in today's digital marketplace.

Hawai'i's agritourism industry plays a vital role in diversifying farm revenue, strengthening the connection between consumers and local agriculture, and promoting sustainable economic development in rural communities. Many of our farm and ranch members operate agritourism activities—such as farm tours, farm stands, tasting experiences, and educational programs—that contribute directly to the state's tourism economy. Access to technology, including online booking platforms, digital marketing tools, and e-commerce solutions, is essential to their success.

HFB appreciates the Legislature's commitment to supporting small businesses through technology investment. This bill will help support and grow Hawai'i's agricultural industry while contributing to the broader economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important matter.



Statement of
Isar Mostafanezhad, PhD
CEO
Nalu Scientific, LLC
before the
House Committee on Economic Development and Technology

Wednesday, March 12, 2025
10:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 423 & Videoconference

In consideration of
SB989 SD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee on Economic Development and Technology.

Nalu Scientific, LLC **supports** SB989 SD1 that appropriates funds to the Hawai`i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement.

HTDC will be able to leverage its network of advanced technology and manufacturing companies to assist and support small businesses with training and implementation of advanced technology to foster business growth and economic sustainability so employers will be able to provide Hawai`i living wages to their employees.

HTDC will use funds to provide small businesses with access to modern digital tools and technology to help optimize operations, reduce costs, and become globally competitive in a global market.

I started Nalu Scientific, LLC in 2016. Since then, Nalu Scientific has grown from 2 employees to 18 and has received over 15 Federal Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) awards to design sensors and microchips for the DOE, DOD, NOAA, NIH, and NASA. Our technology is now used in national labs active in areas such as basic energy research and plasma and matter interactions with the purpose of sensing



invisible particles in order to understand their behavior which impacts areas such as material science, medicine and environmental monitoring.

Since my business's beginning, we have captured continuous growth fueled by our Research and Development (R&D) and product development efforts within a deep-tech industry that is notoriously difficult to conquer for small startup businesses. The Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) has been instrumental in assisting Nalu Scientific's growth as they have provided Nalu with pivotal funding to hire talented local professionals and have helped us to commercialize some of our developing products.

Specifically, HTDC's Hawaii Small Business Innovation Research (HSBIR) match grants, which match funding for up to 50% of one each of our phase I and phase II federal SBIR awards annually, has contributed to producing exceptional results for us. Because of HTDC's generous HSBIR funding, Nalu Scientific has been able to expand on R&D efforts, target new commercial markets, and help us maintain and produce more high-earning jobs for our local employees; most of whom we are proud to say are born-and-raised in Hawai'i and have received higher education from local universities.

I urge the House Committee on Economic Development and Technology to consider the stories of local technology companies, such as Nalu Scientific, when allocating funding for SB989.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments.

Sincerely,

Isar Mostafanezhad, PhD
Founder & CEO
Nalu Scientific, LLC



**Testimony to the House Committee on Economic Development & Technology (ECD)
Representative Greggor Ilagan, Chair
Representative Ikaika Hussey, Vice Chair**

**Wednesday, March 12, 2025, at 10:00AM
Conference Room 423 & Videoconference**

RE: SB989 SD1 Relating to Economic Development

Aloha e Chair Ilagan, Vice Chair Hussey, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports Senate Bill 989 Senate Draft 1 (SB989 SD1, which appropriates funds to the Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation to assist small businesses with technology enablement. Requires a report to the Legislature.

SB989 SD1 aligns with our 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii: An Economic Action Plan, specifically under the policy pillar for Small Business. This bill promotes policies that drive economic growth, enhance workforce opportunities, and improve the quality of life for Hawaii's residents.

With small businesses facing critical technological challenges and increased competition in a digital marketplace, immediate technology adoption is imperative for sustained success in Hawaii. The legislature finds that leveraging digital tools—such as booking systems, online marketing platforms, and data analytics—not only helps reduce costs and optimize operations but also expands market reach and enhances the visitor experience for tourism-based enterprises. Moreover, technology adoption mitigates the risks posed by geographic isolation by facilitating remote work, virtual services, and e-commerce, thus ensuring that small businesses can innovate and remain competitive in a rapidly evolving economy.

Recognizing these pressing needs, the legislature has appropriated funds for fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 to support technology enablement, with the experienced Hawaii Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) tasked with executing the initiative and providing detailed progress reports. HTDC's proven track record in fostering innovation, economic diversification, and effective grant administration underscores the strategic deployment of state resources for maximum impact. The Chamber supports this initiative because it promises to drive economic resilience, bolster competitiveness, and secure a sustainable future for Hawaii's small business community.

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is the state's leading business advocacy organization, dedicated to improving Hawaii's economy and securing Hawaii's future for growth and opportunity. Our mission is to foster a vibrant economic climate. As such, we support initiatives and policies that align with the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii that create opportunities to strengthen overall competitiveness, improve the quantity and skills of available workforce, diversify the economy, and build greater local wealth.

We respectfully ask to pass Senate Bill 989 Senate Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

SB-989-SD-1

Submitted on: 3/12/2025 2:07:35 PM

Testimony for ECD on 3/12/2025 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tanya Aynessazian	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support!