



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Monday, March 31, 2025
10:00 AM State Capitol, Conference Room 211
In consideration of
H.B. No. 1391, H.D.1, S.D.1
RELATING TO TRADE.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) offers the following comments to H.B. No.1391 which establishes the Hawaii-Ireland trade commission within DBEDT.

While such a commission may help identify trade opportunities and provide a pathway to bring these opportunities with Ireland to fruition, establishing a commission requires compliance with sunshine laws and confirmation of commissioners, and funding for research. Funding in the amount of \$25,000 is requested to adequately address this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senator Sharon Y. Moriwaki, Vice Chair**

**Monday, March 31, 2025, at 10:02AM
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference**

RE: HB1391 HD1 SD1 Relating to Trade

LATE

Aloha e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Sherry Menor, President and CEO of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber"). The Chamber supports House Bill 1391 House Draft 1 Senate Draft 1 (HB1391 HD1 SD1), which establishes the Hawai'i-Ireland Trade Commission within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism for administrative purposes. Requires annual reports to the Legislature and Governor.

HB1391 HD1 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.

Hawaii aims to diversify its economy and strengthen international ties through collaboration with global partners, and Ireland presents a unique opportunity in this regard. By creating the Hawaii-Ireland Trade Commission—ensuring representation that includes the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii for its expertise in economic development and fostering local business growth—the State can facilitate bilateral trade, coordinate policy strategies, and promote academic and business exchanges with Ireland. Such a coordinated effort will expand market opportunities for local enterprises, encourage mutual investment in infrastructure, and open new channels for collaboration in areas like technology, education, and culture.

The Commission's structure—composed of representatives appointed by the Governor, the House Speaker, and the Senate President—ensures a comprehensive range of expertise and shared responsibility for strengthening Hawaii-Ireland relations. By facilitating dialogue, engagement, and joint ventures, this initiative positions Hawaii to leverage strategic partnerships, ultimately leading to greater economic vitality and a more diverse commercial landscape. For these reasons, the Chamber supports the measure, as it extends Hawaii's global reach and creates valuable business opportunities for local communities.

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 House Bill 1391 House Draft 1 Senate Draft 1. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.