



2025 Legislative Agenda

Chamber of Commerce Hawaii

Proudly serving as Hawaii's advocate for business for 175 years.
cochawaii.org | (808) 545-4300



Aloha,

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii's more than 2,000 business members represent a wide range of industries, and we're proud to support them by championing initiatives that improve the state's economic climate and help businesses of all sizes succeed.

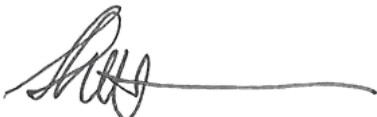
That's why it is my privilege to introduce the Chamber's 2025 Legislative Agenda. This plan outlines the comprehensive legislative bill package and policy positions formulated by our Economic Development, Government & Community Relations team and Board of Directors. The agenda is designed to support and promote the interests of Hawaii's local business community during the 2025 Legislative Session.

The items in the 2025 Legislative Agenda complement the extensive research done in the Chamber's 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii. This economic action plan offers recommendations for enhancing business practices across the community, county, and state levels for the greater good. It's a plan for Hawaii that we can all be proud of.

This year's Agenda is also focused on improving the efficiency of Hawaii's overall business climate, retaining our local workforce, fostering workforce development, creating a more competitive economy, and bolstering collaborative work-based learning. From establishing a task force that supports the state's manufacturing and creative industries, as well as advancing the agriculture industry and helping businesses incorporate advanced technologies, the 2025 Agenda is a well-rounded approach to effecting lasting change.

Join us! We are eager to collaborate with you to enhance Hawaii's economic competitiveness and resilience throughout this legislative session.

Mahalo,



Sherry Menor-McNamara
President and CEO
Chamber of Commerce Hawaii

About the Chamber

Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is a statewide coalition of more than 2,000 businesses including small companies and nonprofits that represent 200,000+ employees. With members on every island, we make Hawaii a better place to do business. Advocacy, education, events, and initiatives help our members thrive. We are one of the nation's oldest, most established Chambers. Our efforts have given rise to many important organizations. We are an independent nonprofit that works collaboratively with Chambers statewide and throughout the nation on economic prosperity for all.

Our History

Chamber of Commerce Hawaii is one of the oldest business organizations in the state and the second oldest Chamber west of the Rockies. It all began in 1850 with 10 of Honolulu's leading businessmen signing a constitution for a chamber of commerce. As it evolved, this organization came to play a major role in building Honolulu.

The California Gold Rush of 1848 created a demand for food and supplies from Honolulu and Hawaii's business boom began. People and goods quickly began to flow back and forth between Honolulu and San Francisco ports. A small group of merchants realized that to secure the advantages the islands had to offer for commerce, they would need to stand together with common goals and policies for trade and commerce, along with addressing the concerns of the island community.

Today, the Chamber continues to represent the interests of Hawaii's business community. With more than 2,000 member companies representing over 200,000 employees, the Chamber serves as the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii.

Meet the Team



Sherry Menor-McNamara
President & CEO



M. Tonga Hopoi
Vice President, Economic Development,
Government and Community Relations



Nadia Holt
Manager, Government Affairs
and Business Advocacy

Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

David Okabe, EVP, CFO & Treasurer, Hawaii Pacific Health, Chair

Mike Ching, Managing Partner, EY, Chair-Elect

Denise Yamaguchi, President & CEO, Hawaii Agricultural Foundation, First Vice Chair

Kyle Shelly, Senior Vice President & Director, Corporate Banking, American Savings Bank, 2nd Vice Chair

Galen Nakamura, Executive VP, Metro Commercial Banking Center, Bank of Hawaii, Budget Finance Investment Committee Chair

Ku'uhaku Park, Senior VP, Government & Community Relations Pacific, Matson, Past Chair

BOARD MEMBERS

John Aeto, Founder & President, The Kalaimoku Group

Christine Beale, Director of Workforce Development, University of Hawaii

Manu Bermudes, Vice President Human Resources, Hawaii Gas

Tran Chinery, Vice President, Marketing & Communications, Alexander & Baldwin

Dennis Christianson, Managing Partner, Anthology Group of FINN Partners

Trini Kaopuiki Clark, President & CEO, Make-A-Wish Hawaii

Heather Cutter, President, Cutter Management Co.

Butch Galdeira, President, Diamond Bakery

Steve Golden, Vice President, External Affairs, Hawaiian Telcom

Michelle Leon-Guerrero, Chief Administrative Officer, Hawaiian Host Group

Jeff Higashi, Senior Vice President & Commercial Banking Regional Manager, First Hawaiian Bank

Karey Kapoi, Owner, Karey Kapoi LLC

Jim Kelly, VP, Government & Community Relations & Corporate Communications, Hawaiian Electric

Blaine Miyasato, Managing Director - State Government Affairs, Hawaiian Airlines

Rachel Hoke Miyashiro, Director, Torkildson Katz, A Law Corporation

Diane Murakami, Executive Vice President, Commercial Markets, Central Pacific Bank

Bernard Nunies, Vice President, Chief Human Resources Officer, Tradewind Group

Gary Oda, President, Allied Builders

Megumi Sakae, SVP of Human Resources and General Counsel, Marathon Group/BEI Hawaii

Greg Sakaguchi, COO, Island Movers

Jenny Smith, Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer, HMSA

Craig Takamine, President, Takamine Construction, Inc.

Kevin Yim, Vice President, Marketing & Communications, Zippy's / FCH Enterprises Inc.

Justin Yoshino, President, Market Advantage

Jessica Yuhara, Chair, Young Professionals





2030 BLUEPRINT FOR HAWAII

A Data-Informed Economic Action Plan

The 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii is a data-informed, long-term strategic action plan for the business community to lead and transform the trajectory of Hawaii's economic future. It is a visionary economic action plan that calls for data-informed policymaking and direct change based on a comprehensive study of the state's past and present realities.

Six Pillars of Opportunity

Business sectors that present specific opportunities to create a more economically competitive state were identified. These pillars are the key to aligning our initiatives with state objectives.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM



MILITARY AND DEFENSE



SMALL BUSINESS



BUSINESS SERVICES



**21ST CENTURY
AGRICULTURE**



MARITIME



To learn more about the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii and read the full report, visit cochawaii.org/2030-Blueprint.



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 2025

Key Economic Challenges

- A high cost of living and insufficient access to affordable housing and childcare prevents the development and retention of a qualified, adequate local workforce.
- Antiquated and overly burdensome regulatory barriers at the county and state levels cause extensive delays and cost increases that make it difficult to grow and expand businesses.
- High state tax liabilities cripple economic growth opportunities, deter new business formation, and quash entrepreneurship.

Recent Rankings

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| • CNBC Best States for Business | 47th |
| • Chief Executive Best & Worst States for Business | 43rd |
| • CNBC Cost of Doing Business | 50th |
| • US News Infrastructure Rankings | 37th |
| • State & Local Taxes per Capita | 6th highest |
| • Percent of Households Cost Burdened by Rent of Mortgage | 2nd highest |
| • Tax Foundation Business Tax Climate | 42nd |

2025 Legislative Focus

Improve Overall Economic Competitiveness

Foster Innovation and Growth Opportunities

Empower Hawaii's Workforce Development

Expand Work-Based Learning

To learn more about the 2030 Blueprint for Hawaii, please contact the Economic Development, Government & Community Relations Department at 2030Blueprint@cochawaii.org.



2025 Legislative Bill Package

The Chamber advocates for policies that elevate Hawaii's 2030 Blueprint, driving progress toward a stronger business climate and a more dynamic, competitive economy.



TRAVEL & TOURISM

The Chamber is in support of utilizing innovative technologies, enhancing experiences, ensuring timely renovations, and implementing regional tourism strategies for sustainable growth.

Senate Bill 1299

- Increases technology enablement for small businesses, particularly those in the tourism sector, to adopt technology to optimize operations and reduce costs
- Strengthens partnerships between Hawai'i Technology Development Corporation (HTDC) and other organizations, like Hawaii Tourism Authority to foster innovation, resilience, and economic sustainability

House Bill 448 and House Bill 449

- Authorizes HTDC to assist small businesses in adopting technology, particularly those in the tourism sector. HTDC, leveraging its expertise in technology-driven initiatives and innovation, is tasked with administering and supporting these projects
- Appropriates funds for the INNOVATE Hawaii program to support the development and promotion of products made in Hawaii



SMALL BUSINESS

The Chamber is in support of identifying gaps in small-business support, promoting entrepreneurial pathways through work-based learning, and elevating local entrepreneurship as an economic driver.

Senate Bill 989

- Mandates HTDC with overseeing technology-enablement projects for small businesses to enhance innovation and economic diversification

Senate Bill 992

- Achieves economic development in three diverse areas: digital economy, strengthened trade activities, and climate change mitigation
- Appropriates funds to the Small Business Innovation Research Program, Manufacturing Assistance Program, and Accelerator and Small Business Training Programs

House Bill 454

- Establishes a public policy framework to support state goals for economic diversification
- Provides funding for initiatives focused on the digital economy, enhanced trade activities, affordable renewable energy, and climate change mitigation
- Mandates the HTDC to submit annual reports to the legislature summarizing the progress of the programs over three years



21ST CENTURY AGRICULTURE

The Chamber is in support of agricultural research at educational facilities, promoting agricultural career paths, and advocating for value-added agriculture and food manufacturers programs.

Senate Bill 1184 and House Bill 776

- Establishes an agricultural transportation assistance program to reduce the financial burden on agricultural producers, thus enabling reinvestment in operations and boosting local food production

- Creates a reimbursement program for eligible transportation costs, including transporting agricultural products, equipment, and supplies. \$8,000 cap per applicant per year
- Initiates a grant program for small-scale farmers, ranchers, and agricultural producers in rural areas to subsidize transportation costs

2025 Legislative Bill Package



MILITARY AND DEFENSE

The Chamber is in support of developing a skilled local workforce for cybersecurity; utilizing AI to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance safety; advancing tech-based manufacturing to expedite repairs; and investing in space technology as the next frontier of innovation.

Senate Bill 1502 and House Bill 1206

- Enhances University of Hawaii's (UH) programs in defense and tech through funding for faculty positions and internship/training programs at UH Manoa/UH West Oahu, and supports the Academy for Hawaii Intelligence Studies Summer Program (\$75,000 appropriation)

Senate Bill 1503 and House Bill 1205

- Meets the growing demand for defense-related jobs through funding for workforce development, training programs, public-private partnerships, grants/scholarships, and outreach/recruitment
- Promotes economic diversification and addresses workforce gaps through targeted training and recruitment initiatives



BUSINESS SERVICES

The Chamber is in support of adopting technologies to streamline services; prioritizing quality-of-life improvements like childcare, housing, and infrastructure; and investing in parks, homeless reduction, youth centers, and community spaces.

Senate Bill 1125 and House Bill 1377

- Establishes early-learning cooperatives, where parents and staff collaborate to provide affordable, high-quality childcare while fostering cultural and community engagement

Senate Bill 1200 and House Bill 1317

- Creates a "workforce housing regulatory sandbox" for temporary modifications to regulatory requirements to facilitate the development of affordable housing targeted at essential workers

Senate Bill 1277

- Equips students with essential skills in budgeting, saving, investing, credit management, and more, to better prepare them for financial success

House Bill 936

- Enhances financial literacy education in Hawaii's public high schools
- Provides teacher training and support, with a coordinator overseeing curriculum quality and successful integration



MARITIME

The Chamber is in support of enhancing maritime skilled trades for shipbuilding and repairs, developing training programs in community colleges and high schools, and partnering with county and state agencies to expand harbor and marina facilities.

Senate Bill 1076

- Improves efficiency and scope of harbor improvement projects by increasing the limits on capital advancement contracts for harbor improvements in Hawaii to expedite project delivery for port resilience and operational efficiency

House Bill 960

- Provides the Department of Transportation (DOT) more flexibility in executing harbor improvement projects
 - Increases the allowable maximum value of capital advancement contracts that the DOT is authorized to execute



“The future of Hawaii is ours to shape. This agenda embodies our dedication to fostering a thriving business environment today while building a brighter future for generations ahead. Inspired by this project’s passion, we are energized to move forward together and create a prosperous Hawaii for all.”

Sherry Menor-McNamara
President & CEO
Chamber of Commerce Hawaii



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