

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Economic Development and
Technology
Friday, February 3, 2012 at 2:30 p.m.
Conference Room 016, State Capitol**

RE: SENATE BILL NO. 2737 RELATING TO PUBLIC MEETINGS

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

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports the passage of SB 2737** relating to Public Meetings for further discussion.

The Chamber is the largest business organization in Hawaii, representing more than 1,100 businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of its members, which employ more than 200,000 individuals, to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

The Chamber supports S.B. No. 2737 which proposes to increase the ability of members of boards and commissions subject to the "Sunshine Law," part I of chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes (HRS), to attend meetings by allowing boards to conduct board meetings at multiple locations by audio only interactive forms of conference technology, including teleconferencing, videoconferencing, and voice over Internet protocol.

The Chamber supports this bill because it recognizes the challenges of conducting open meetings in an island state. It also recognizes the improvements in technology that make it easier and more cost effective to have a hearing/meeting at multiple locations throughout the state. As travel costs continue to increase, this is a reasonable and cost effective way to allow for greater public participation through the use of technology. While we support the intent of the Sunshine Law, based on past practices and common sense, we believe that the proposed amendments will improve public participation and allow for the Board to gain additional insight while protecting the public's right to know how decisions are made.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our views.