

**Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary  
Tuesday, February 7, 2012 at 2:00 p.m.  
Conference Room 325, State Capitol**

**RE: HOUSE BILL 2475 RELATING TO PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Chair Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair Rhoads, and Members of the Committee:

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports the passage of HB 2475** 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 HB 2475 which proposes to allow use of interactive conference technology to increase ability of members of state and county boards and commissions to attend board meetings.

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.