

Business Revitalization Task Force

8th Meeting Minutes (draft)

Meeting was held virtually via Zoom and physical location at 250 South Hotel Street, Room 435,
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813
October 23, 2025
2:00 p.m. – 2:42 p.m.

PRESENT:

1. **James Kunane Tokioka, Director**
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
2. **Dean I Hazama, Deputy Director**
Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs
3. **Kristen Sakamoto, Deputy Director**
Department of Taxation
4. **David J. Rodriguez, Equal Opportunity Officer**
Department of Labor and Industrial Relations
5. **Sandra Fujiyama, Director of Pacific Asian Center for Entrepreneurship**
University of Hawai'i at Manoa Shidler College of Business
6. **Amy Asselbaye, Executive Director**
Honolulu Office of Economic Revitalization
7. **Dennis Lin, Deputy Director**
Department of Research & Development, Hawai'i County
8. **Nalani Brun, Director**
Office of Economic Development , County of Kauai
9. **Tessa Gomes, Representative**
Small Business Regulatory Review Board
10. **Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director**
Hawai'i Farm Bureau
11. **Alec Sou, President & General Manager**
Aloun Farms
12. **Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director**
Hawai'i Food Industry Association

13. **Roseann Freitas, Chief Executive Officer**
Building Industry Association of Hawai‘i
14. **Monty Pereira, GM and Sales & Marketing Director**
Watanabe Floral
15. **Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Founder & Chief Executive Officer**
Oceanit
16. **Constancio Paranal, Representative**
Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawai‘i
17. **Wendy Laros, President & Chief Executive Officer**
Kona-Kohala Chamber of Commerce
18. **Tonga Hopoi, Vice President, Economic Development, Government & Community Relations**
Chamber of Commerce of Hawai‘i
19. **Sherry Menor- McNamara, Chief Executive Officer**
Chamber of Commerce Hawai‘i
20. **Jeannine Souki, Senior Manager, Government & Regulatory Affairs**
Hawaiian Telcom
21. **Jimmy Chan, Owner & Founder**
Hawaiian Chip Company
22. **Jade P. Rojas-Letisi, Executive Assistant**
Office of the Mayor, County of Maui
23. **Tina Yamaki, President**
Retail Merchants of Hawai‘i

ABSENT:

1. **Kurt Miyashiro, Manager**
MK Equipment Corporation
2. **Jacob Aki, Public Affairs Manager**
Alaska Airline
3. **Sue Kanoho, Managing Director**
Island Chapters & Executive Director, Kaua‘i Visitors Bureau

Staff Members:

Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT),
Research and Economic Analysis Division (READ): Dr. Seth Colby, Joseph
Roos, Mustafa Shirzad.

CALL TO ORDER:

Time lapse: 2:02 p.m. – 2:04 p.m.

Dr. Seth Colby called the meeting to order; 23 members were present.

SUMMARY:

Dr. Seth Colby convened the meeting and announced that the packet materials sent on Tuesday October 21, 2025, did not meet the Sunshine Law requirements of three business days in advance. Therefore, the packet related agenda items were deferred until the next meeting, and there were no motions or voting regarding these materials. After the call to order, there was general discussion regarding task force goals, the legislative proposal for a bill, and agenda items for the next meeting.

Agenda Item 1. Communication to the Task Force and Public Comment

Time lapse: 2:06 p.m. – 2:07 p.m.

Dr. Seth Colby opened the floor for public comments and noted that no testimony or comments had been received. No additional comments or issues were raised.

Agenda Item 2: High level discussion of Final Task Force Report and Legislative Proposal

Time lapse: 2:08 p.m. – 2:40 p.m.

Goal Adjustment and Budget Discussion

The group discussed adjusting the 2035 CNBC ranking goal from 35th to 30th, with Dr. Patrick Sullivan expressing concern about setting incremental and unambitious targets. Dr. Seth Colby clarified that the 40th and 10th goals remain in place. Dennis Lin raised concerns regarding the \$300,000 appropriation request within the legislative proposal, noting state budget constraints. Director James Tokioka emphasized the importance of presenting the proposal despite budget uncertainties.

Business Competitiveness Legislative Bill Content

Members discussed how to structure and advance the Business Competitiveness Bill proposal. Members stressed the importance of getting the bill to a vote, even if it fails, to signal that economic competitiveness is a legislative priority. Dr. Seth Colby described

changes to the bill: aligning it with CNBC's 10 competitiveness categories, removing specified stakeholder groups, and shifting from a standalone committee to working within an existing department and a closer collaboration. The group agreed to include language regarding a potential commission so that the legislature understands its importance and can modify it accordingly. Dr. Seth Colby mentioned circulating a revised draft for review before the final meeting, after which the signed report will be submitted to legislature.

Governance and Structure Considerations

Members discussed two options for the governance and legal structure of the body proposed in the legislative proposal: (1) working group placed under an existing state department or (2) a commission separate from existing state departments. Wendy Laros opened the discussion by noting the difference between the task force report, which recommends establishing a working group, and the legislative bill, which instead assigns those responsibilities to DBEDT. Deputy Attorney General John Cole stated that, under the Sunshine Law, any board or group must be formally created by the constitution, statute, or executive order. Dr. Patrick Sullivan pointed out a commission may be more effective for long-term policy influence. John Cole advised keeping membership small if a commission is formed. Dr. Seth Colby and John Cole agreed to explain the trade-offs of the two structures proposed for law makers.

Agenda Item 3: Schedule for next meeting

Time lapse: 2:40 p.m. – 2:42 p.m.

Dr. Seth Colby suggested scheduling the next meeting between mid to late November, and members agreed with the specific date to be determined later.

NEXT SETPS

1. The DBEDT/READ team will modify the language of the task force report and the legislative bill about the trade-offs between efficiency, collaboration, and legitimacy regarding the working group/commission structure.
2. The DBEDT/READ team will work with John Cole to align the language between the task force report and the legislative proposal.
3. The Task force members will submit specific comments about the wording or language of the task force report by October 31st.
4. The DBEDT/READ team finalizes the report and distributes it to the task force well ahead of the next meeting.
5. The DBEDT/READ team will schedule the final meeting for the task force in mid-to-late November.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.