

PROMOTION

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voice of business

August 2008

The Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii

## 2008 Legislative Wrap-Up Report

When the Legislature closed on May 1st, The Chamber had actively tracked over 100 bills. With increased participation by members in the legislative process and persistent advocacy efforts at the Capitol, the Chamber was pleased with the final outcome.

Find out what tools and activities made it easy for members to “Take Action” this past session.



# 2008 Legislative Wrap-Up Report

## Members Participated And Enhanced Their Stance At The Legislature

Sherry Menor-McNamara, Vice President  
Business Advocacy/Government Affairs

### Session Activity

- Reviewed over **2,700 bills**
- Monitored over **200 bills**
- Actively tracked over **100 bills**
- Testified over **120 times**

Final adjournment of the 2008 Legislative Session was on May 1. Of the over 2,700 bills introduced, over 15 bills that were on the Chamber's active priority bill tracking list passed the Legislature and were sent to Governor Lingle for consideration (at press time, action was still pending on some. The Governor had until July 8 to officially sign or veto the bill, or pass the bill without her signature.)

This session posed some challenges for the business community. However, with increased participation in the legislative process and persistent advocacy efforts at the Capitol, some of these obstacles turned into preferable outcomes. Most notable are the "Successor Employer" and the "Card Check" bills, both of which would have undermined Hawaii's business environment, if passed. Other bills that would have increased the cost of doing business also did not pass or passed with compromise language.

The Chamber made it easier for members and the business community to obtain up-to-date information on the activities at the Legislature, as well as provided different options to TAKE ACTION.

We also coordinated legislative activities for members to get involved in the process. The following is a summary of new initiatives as well as activities that took place:

- Legislative Action Center E-Newsletter
- Legislative Agenda
- "Action Alert" System
- "Walk Around" at the State Capitol
- "Legislative Training 101" Class
- "Bagels and Bills" Legislative Update Session
- Legislative Business Forum & Reception

The Chamber sends a BIG mahalo to its members, neighbor islands and other affiliated chambers, as well as members of the business community for aggressively participating in the legislative process and for voicing their concerns. One "Action Alert" generated over 600 messages from businesses to the legislators. Together, we thwarted legislation that could have had a negative impact on the cost of doing business and on Hawaii's business climate. This session, we have certainly PARTICIPATED AND ENHANCED OUR STANCE.

Also, we are truly appreciative of the actions taken by the Legislature and thank them for their careful deliberation and consideration of our positions on key legislation. Under the leadership of Senate President Colleen Hanabusa and Speaker Calvin Say, the legislators always took the time to listen to the Chamber and business community's concerns on key issues. We commend their commitment, dedication, and hard work put forth this session especially as they faced challenging issues in a changing economic period.

## THE CHAMBER'S TOP PRIORITY BILLS

BILL	DESCRIPTION	CHAMBER POSITION	ACTION
<b>SB 2808</b> <b>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT</b>	Clarifies that when 2 or more agencies have jurisdiction, the office of environmental quality control shall determine which agency has the responsibility of preparing an environmental assessment after consultation with and assistance from the affected state or county agencies. Makes clarifications to the rulemaking powers of the environmental council.	SUPPORT	Law
<b>SB 3227</b> <b>HARBORS</b>	Expands the authority of the aloha tower development corporation to assist in the development of the statewide harbors modernization plan by establishing the Harbors Modernization Group. Authorizes the department of transportation to issue revenue bonds to finance the harbor improvements. Appropriates or authorizes monies from the harbor revenue bond funds.	SUPPORT	Law
<b>HB 2974</b> <b>LABOR</b>	Certifies entities as exclusive representatives absent an election where no other representatives are certified as the exclusive representatives. Requires immediate collective bargaining between parties once entities are certified as exclusive representatives. Effective 07/01/2008.	OPPOSE	Not overridden by the Legislature
<b>HB 2929</b> <b>WORKERS' COMPENSATION</b>	Requires independent medical examinations and Permanent Impairment Rating Examinations to be performed by mutually agreed upon physicians. Effective 7/1/2008. Sunsets in 7/01/2011.	OPPOSE	On Governor's desk at press time.
<b>HB 2386</b> <b>WORKERS' COMPENSATION</b>	Requires an employer to pay temporary total disability benefits regardless of whether the employer controverts the right to benefits. Specifies that the employee's ability to return to work is to be decided by the employee's treating physician	OPPOSE	On Governor's desk at press time.
<b>HB 2388</b> <b>WORKERS' COMPENSATION</b>	Requires the employer to continue medical services to an injured employee despite disputes over whether treatment should be continued, until the director of labor and industrial relations decides whether treatment should be continued.	OPPOSE	On Governor's desk at press time.
<b>HB 2520</b> <b>CAREGIVERS</b>	Establishes a working group to explore the provision of wage replacement benefits to employees who need time off from work to care for a family member with a serious health condition. (HB2520 CD1).	SUPPORT	On Governor's desk at press time.
<b>HB 1745</b> <b>EMPLOYMENT</b>	Requires successor employers to retain 100% of the non-supervisory workforce unless the nature of the business is substantially dissimilar to the former establishment. Applies to business establishments that employ over 100 persons.	OPPOSE	Did not pass the Legislature
<b>SB 2829</b> <b>TAXATION</b>	Requires the Department of Taxation to evaluate certain tax credits and tax exemptions and report to the Legislature. Provides for automatic repeal of the tax credits and tax exemptions. Provides penalty for excessive amounts filed for tax refunds and credits.	OPPOSE	Did not pass the Legislature

For a complete listing and description of bills that The Chamber actively tracked and the current status, visit [www.cochawaii.org](http://www.cochawaii.org).



## VOICE OF BUSINESS

# Making it Easy for Members to Use Their Voice

### Legislative Activities and Tools

#### Legislative Action Center E-Newsletter

The inaugural e-newsletter was distributed to over 1,100 members. This weekly newsletter provided information on legislative and bill status updates, which provided links to Chamber testimony, bills, committee and status reports, "Action Alerts", Chamber's legislative events and activities, political fundraisers, as well as Chamber committee updates and other pertinent information. Members could also take action via the e-newsletter.

It also featured a "Member Advocate of the Week" section which purpose was to highlight a member company who responded to "Action Alerts" and who actively engaged in legislative activities.

The e-newsletter was made available on the Chamber's website.

#### "Bagels and Bills" Legislative Update Session

The purpose of this session was to provide an update to members about important legislation that was going through the legislative process. Committee chairs provided brief explanations as to how the bills would or would have impacted business.

This was the second year holding this free session.

#### Legislative Action Center "Action Alert" System

Last year, we initiated the "Action Alert" system. To increase membership participation in the legislative process, such as submitting testimony or sending letters to legislators, The Chamber sent "Action Alerts" whenever we needed our members to take action. Essentially, these alerts were sent via e-mail, which provided sample letters and talking points.

This year, the system was enhanced via a grassroots lobbying tool. This system simplified the process for our members to get involved. All members had to do was fill out their contact information and click the "send" button. Talking points, pre-set messages and recipients of the messages such as committee chairs and members' legislators were pre-set.

Over 1,000 messages were sent to legislators this session through this system.

The Chamber will continue to use this system in following sessions.

#### "Walk Around" at the State Capitol

The Chamber held four "walk arounds" representing small and big business, neighbor island, regional, and ethnic chambers, as well as other business organizations.

The purpose was to go door-to-door calling for the legislators' support of the Chamber's position.

#### "Legislative 101" Legislative Training Class

The purpose of this class was to explain how a bill becomes a law, the importance of getting involved, and how to get involved.

This free class was given to not only the Chamber membership, but to the neighbor island chambers such as Maui and Ka'u Chambers. This was the third year for this event.

#### Legislative Business Forum and Reception

The purpose of this event was to provide an opportunity for members and legislators to meet and network as well as for members to meet affiliated chamber members.

Information on The Chamber's Business Advocacy activities, Legislative Action Center e-newsletter, and a link to the Legislative Action Center are available on The Chamber's website under "Legislative Update."

To learn more about these initiatives or how you can get involved as a member, please contact Sherry Menor-McNamara, at (808) 545-4300, ext. 394 or smenor-mcnamara@cochawaii.org.

