

## Hawaii State Visit

Edgar Ruiz, CSG West Director, and accompanying staff arrived at the Hawaii State Capitol on March 19 for the annual state visit. Capitol staff and legislators, already in the midst of a busy legislative session, had celebrated the 50-year Anniversary of the Capitol Building the weekend before, with ceremonies and symposiums highlighting the form, function, and important cultural values the building embodies in its architecture and as the workplace to advance the interests of Hawaiians and address the issues and concerns of its many communities.

Past CSG West chair, Senator Brian Taniguchi, and Representative Lynne DeCoite, chair of CSG West's Agriculture Committee, introduced CSG staff in the Senate and House, respectively. Senator Taniguchi co-hosted the [Western Legislative Academy](#) (WLA) Alumni Breakfast, where legislators were able to connect and share information about their experience at the WLA, as well as learn of the organization's activities for the year. Alumni are reaching out to their eligible colleagues to offer encouragement and support in the application process for this year's class, which closes on April 19.

CSG West staff attended a hearing of the [House Committee on Agriculture](#), which heard testimony on a variety of bills addressing Hawaiian agriculture, including proposals to establish a new agricultural enterprise program for agricultural infrastructure; expand the definition of "qualified agriculture costs" covered by the qualified agricultural tax credit; appropriations for the agricultural loan revolving fund to assist ranchers and farmers affected by natural disasters and; transfer of operational authority over portions of the east Kauai irrigation system – currently operated and maintained by the east Kauai water user's cooperative – to the Hawaii State Department of Agriculture.

CSG West staff visited Senate and House offices and connected with legislators and their staff. This included meetings with legislative leaders from both chambers. Senator Taniguchi and Representative DeCoite, CSG Champions and members of the CSG West Executive Committee, extended a warm welcome and support, which made the state visit successful. **Mahalo** to both of them for their support and involvement with CSG West and to all the Senators and Representatives working so hard on behalf of their constituents and the great State of Hawaii!



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