

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM
HAWAII EMPLOYER-UNION HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST FUND
OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER

LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR

SABRINA NASIR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
Ka 'Oihana Mālama Mo'ohelu a Kālā
P.O. BOX 150
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0150

ADMINISTRATIVE AND RESEARCH OFFICE
BUDGET, PROGRAM PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION
FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION DIVISION
OFFICE OF FEDERAL AWARDS MANAGEMENT

WRITTEN ONLY

TESTIMONY BY LUIS P. SALAVERIA
DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND FINANCE
TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
ON
HOUSE BILL NO. 934, H.D. 1, S.D. 1

April 1, 2025
10:01 a.m.

Room 211 and Videoconference

RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

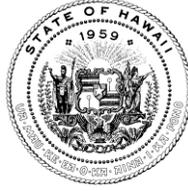
The Department of Budget and Finance (B&F) offers comments on this bill.

House Bill (H.B.) No. 934, H.D. 1, S.D. 1: 1) establishes the Broadband Office (BO) within the Office of Enterprise Technology Services; 2) establishes the Broadband Revolving Fund (BRF) to be administered by BO for the purposes of supporting broadband projects, defraying the cost of internet services, and funding positions for personnel to provide technical assistance for the community; 3) repeals Chapter 206S, HRS, Section 440G-11.5, HRS, and Section 3 of Act 199, SLH 2010, as amended by Section 5 of Act 151, SLH 2011, as amended by Section 2 of Act 23, SLH 2016; 4) appropriates \$200,000 in general funds for FY 26 to be deposited into the BRF; 5) appropriates \$200,000 out of the BRF for FY 26 for reimbursement of contracts executed by BO; and 6) appropriates an unspecified amount out of the BRF for FY 26 for the establishment of an unspecified number of digital navigator positions.

As a matter of general policy, B&F does not support the creation of any revolving fund, which does not meet the requirements of Section 37-52.4, HRS. Revolving funds

should: 1) serve a need as demonstrated by the purpose, scope of work, and an explanation why the program cannot be implemented successfully under the general fund appropriation process; 2) reflect a clear nexus between the benefits sought and charges made upon the users or beneficiaries or a clear link between the program and the sources of revenue; 3) provide an appropriate means of financing for the program or activity; and 4) demonstrate the capacity to be financially self-sustaining. Regarding H.B. No. 934, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, it is difficult to determine whether the BRF would be self-sustaining.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
P.O. BOX 541
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
Phone Number: (808) 586-2850
Fax Number: (808) 586-2856
cca.hawaii.gov

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR | KE KIA'ĀINA

SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

DEAN I. HAZAMA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Tuesday, April 1, 2025
10:01 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Via Videoconference

On the following measure:
**H.B. 934 HD1 SD1, RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND
AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Randy Leong, and I am the Cable Television Administrator of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' ("Department") Cable Television Division. The Department supports this bill and requests one amendment.

The purpose of this bill is to transfer the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office (HBDEO) from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services in the Department of Accounting and General Services, rename the HBDEO to Broadband Office, repeal broadband duties assigned to the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, repeal the Broadband Assistance Advisory Council, establish the Broadband Revolving Fund, establish positions, and appropriate funds.

The Department respectfully requests an amendment to consolidate the duty of collecting and posting broadband infrastructure notices pursuant to Section 2 of Act 151

(Session Laws of Hawaii 2011), as amended by Act 264 (Session Laws of Hawaii 2013) and Act 193 (Session Laws of Hawaii 2016) from the Department to the HBDEO/Broadband Office (see attachment, pg.3, line 21). This little-used provision requires the Department to post online notices of certain actions relating to broadband infrastructure on existing utility poles and conduits which use existing infrastructure and facilities. The online notices are for expedited projects which are exempt from county and state permitting and approval requirements, so long as 30-days' notice is provided in advance.

The Department finds it prudent and beneficial to conserve taxpayer resources by consolidating broadband and related duties under one state agency. This would also reduce confusion by having one state office in which the public can be referred to and contact for broadband issues and matters. Due to changes in broadband infrastructure funding and public policy in recent years, the Department has occupied a secondary role to other state agencies who are leading broadband infrastructure development and digital equity initiatives. As such, the Department supports this measure and our requested amendment which is the transfer of duties pursuant to Section 2 of Act 151, as amended, from the Department to the HBDEO/Broadband Office. The Department defers to the other agencies regarding the other sections of this bill which affect those agencies.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

Attachment to follow

ATTACHMENT TO DCCA TESTIMONY – WAM HEARING

(Act 151 Session Laws of Hawaii 2011)

~~BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:~~

1 SECTION 1. Act 199, Session Laws of Hawaii 2010,
2 established a broadband work group to develop procedures for
3 streamlining permitting functions applicable to the development
4 of broadband services and broadband technology. The legislature
5 finds that the broadband work group has recommended the creation
6 of an exemption from various permitting requirements for the
7 installation of new or upgraded broadband infrastructure along
8 existing poles and conduits that are already used for
9 telecommunications. Another discussion item of the broadband
10 work group is the streamlining of the processing of pole,
11 conduit, and duct applications.

12 The purpose of this Act is to facilitate the deployment of
13 high-speed broadband infrastructure in Hawaii by exempting the
14 installation, improvement, construction, or development of
15 infrastructure relating to broadband service or broadband
16 technology from state and county permitting requirements, under
17 certain conditions, and reducing the time and costs associated
18 with requests for access to utility poles and conduits. This

1 Act also makes the director of commerce and consumer affairs a
2- member and chairperson of the broadband assistance advisory
3 council and a member and convenor of the broadband work group
4 established under Act 199, Session Laws of Hawaii 2010, and
5 removes the cable television administrator from the broadband
6 assistance advisory council and the broadband work group.

7 SECTION 2. From January 1, 2012, to January 1, 2017,
8 actions relating to the installation, improvement, construction,
9 or development of infrastructure relating to broadband service
10 or broadband technology, including the interconnection of
11 telecommunications cables, shall be exempt from county
12 permitting requirements, state permitting and approval
13 requirements, which includes the requirements of chapters 171,
14. 205A, and 343, Hawaii Revised Statutes, and public utilities
15 commission rules under Hawaii Administrative Rules, chapter 6-
16 73, that require existing installations to comply with new pole
17 replacement standards at the time of any construction or
18 alteration to the equipment or installation, except to the
19 extent that such permitting or approval is required by federal
20 law or is necessary to protect eligibility for federal funding,
21 services, or other assistance; provided that the installation,

1 improvement, construction, or development of infrastructure
2 shall:

3 (1) Be directly related to the improvement of existing
4 telecommunications cables or the installation of new
5 telecommunications cables:

6 (A) On existing or replacement utility poles and
7 conduits; and

8 (B) Using existing infrastructure and facilities;

9 (2) Take place within existing rights-of-way or public
10 utility easements or use existing telecommunications
11 infrastructure; and

12 (3) Make no significant changes to the existing public
13 rights-of-way, public utility easements, or
14 telecommunications infrastructure.

15 A person or entity shall use reasonable best efforts to
16 comply with all applicable safety and engineering requirements
17 relating to the installation, improvement, construction, or
18 development of infrastructure relating to broadband service.

19 A person or entity taking any action under this section
20 shall, at least thirty calendar days before the action is taken,
21 provide notice to the ~~[director of commerce and consumer affairs]~~
Hawaii broadband digital equity office/Broadband Office

1 by electronic posting in the form and on the site designated by
2 the director for such posting on the designated central State of
3 Hawaii Internet website; provided that notice need not be given
4 by a public utility or government entity for an action relating
5 to the installation, improvement, construction, or development
6 of infrastructure relating to broadband service or broadband
7 technology where the action taken is to provide access as the
8 owner of the existing rights-of-way, utility easements, or
9 telecommunications infrastructure.

[remaining text omitted]



STATE OF HAWAII
KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
'A'UNIKE MOKU'ĀPUNI NO KA NĀ KĀWAI KULA
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543

April 1, 2025

The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Thirty-Third Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Dela Cruz, and Committee members

SUBJECT: HB934 HD1 SD1 Relating to the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB934 HD1 SD1**, which transfers the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services in the Department of Accounting and General Services. Renames the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office to Broadband Office. Repeals broadband duties assigned to the Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs. Repeals the Broadband Assistance Advisory Council. Establishes the Broadband Revolving Fund. Establishes positions. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (SD1)

Access to broadband and digital technology is critical for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) to fully participate in society. Reliable internet connectivity and digital literacy are essential for accessing telehealth services, engaging in educational opportunities, securing employment, and participating in community life. HB934 HD1 SD1 strengthens the State's infrastructure to ensure digital equity, especially for underserved and vulnerable populations.

The proposed restructuring and the establishment of the special fund will enhance the State's ability to develop and implement strategies to improve broadband access and affordability. The emphasis on supporting broadband projects, and funding positions for technical assistance aligns with the needs of the I/DD community, which often faces significant barriers to digital inclusion.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB934 HD1 SD1**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKA'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2359, Honolulu, Hawaii 96804
Web site: dbedt.hawaii.gov

Telephone: (808) 586-2355
Fax: (808) 586-2377

Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Tuesday, April 1, 2025
Time 10:01AM
State Capitol, Conference Room #211

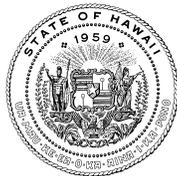
In consideration of
HB934 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) provides the following comments on HB934 HD1 SD1 that transfers the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office (HBDEO) to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services in the Department of Accounting and General Services.

HBDEO has provided steady leadership in state broadband and digital equity. I am confident that regardless of where the Office resides in state government, the Office will continue to provide the necessary leadership and accountability in carrying out its statutory responsibilities and in deployment and management of federal funds. DBEDT will continue to collaborate with the Office as it is an important piece to the future of digital workforce and economic development.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR
KE KIA'ĀINA



KEITH A. REGAN
COMPTROLLER
KA LUNA HO'OMALU HANA LAULĀ

CHRISTINE M. SAKUDA
CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER
LUNA 'ENEHANA

STATE OF HAWAII' | KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII'
DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTING AND GENERAL SERVICES | KA 'OIHANA LOIHELU A LAWELAWE LAULĀ

OFFICE OF ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES | KE'ENA HO'OLANA 'ENEHANA

P.O. BOX 119, HONOLULU, HAWAII 96810-0119

Testimony of
CHRISTINE M. SAKUDA
Chief Information Officer
Office of Enterprise Technology Services

Before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Tuesday, April 1, 2025

HOUSE BILL NO. 934 HD1 SD1
RELATING TO THE HAWAII' BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and members of the committee:

The Office of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) humbly offers **comments** on this bill that transfers the Hawaii' Broadband and Digital Equity Office (HBDEO) from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services in the Department of Accounting and General Services (DAGS), establishes the Broadband Revolving Fund, and appropriates funds.

ETS strongly supports Connect Kākou, led by Governor Josh Green and Lieutenant Governor Sylvia Luke, to ensure that every resident of Hawaii' has access to broadband Internet – plus the skills and devices they need to use the Internet for economic, social, and community prosperity.

Assuming the responsibility of managing the HBDEO is a significant task for ETS. Presently, ETS is dedicated to internal government functions such as enterprise IT governance, cybersecurity, data governance and sharing, and supporting the state's major modernization initiatives. While we are fully committed to ensuring the success of this transition, we must emphasize the need for appropriate funding from both state and federal sources, as diverting current resources is not feasible given our existing commitments.

According to the HBDEO's original request in the upcoming fiscal 2025-2027 biennium budget: *"With the current budget of \$360,000 to fund four staff and operating expenses, HBDEO has been operating with essentially no operating expenses for the past two fiscal years. Proper funding will enable the office to meet its objectives, especially in community outreach to rural, non-Oahu areas of the state."*

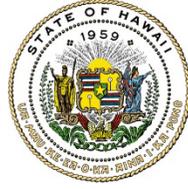
The HBDEO had asked for \$777,090 for FY 26 with \$452,302 for personal services, and \$324,788 for other expenses.

ETS believes that these figures provide for a sound budget, and we ask that the HBDEO be funded with this amount in the FB2025-2027 biennium budget. We believe that without proper funding for both salaries and operations to manage the work the HBDEO is being tasked to do, moving the HBDEO to DAGS-ETS would not improve the functioning of the HBDEO but would in fact negatively impact critical services delivered through our existing program.

ETS will also incur additional operational and administrative costs associated with moving HBDEO's staff and services under our division and costs for the management of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) grant number 15-31-DS042 to support work described in the "Hawai'i's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA)."

Pursuant to [Section 27-43, Hawaii Revised Statutes](#), ETS provides governance and strategic planning for executive branch IT projects and we believe managing the infrastructure operations of broadband fall within the purview of this office. Our statutory responsibilities are focused on the State's enterprise IT infrastructure which has supported departments directly. We have concerns that a lack of adequate resources will dilute this internal focus by diverting resources needed for this public outreach.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.



SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
Ke Ke'ena O Ka Hope Kia'āina

The 33rd Legislature, State of Hawaii
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
April 1, 2025

Testimony on
**H.B. 934 - RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND
DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE**

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of H.B. 934, H.D. 1, S.D. 1** which transfers the Hawaii Broadband Office from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) in the Department of Accounting and General Services, establishes a revolving fund, and appropriates additional funding. We appreciate the amendments made by the Committee on Economic Development and Tourism as reflected in S.D. 1.

Reliable, affordable high speed internet access is essential for ensuring greater educational, economic, and social opportunities for all. The federal and state governments have committed over \$400 million to modernize our subsea and terrestrial infrastructure and equip residents with the tools and knowledge to safely navigate the internet. With the construction of new subsea broadband infrastructure, our state anticipates generating revenue from negotiated lease agreements and the creation of a separate fund will ensure these funds are used to reduce the cost of internet services, provide technical assistance to communities, and support broadband projects. Given the increasingly vital role of broadband in our daily lives, the transfer of the Broadband Office from DBEDT to ETS provides an opportunity to review and centralize broadband responsibilities currently dispersed across state government.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support to H.B. 934, H.D. 1, S.D. 1.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday, April 1, 2025 at 10:01 a.m.

By

Garret T. Yoshimi, Vice President for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer
University of Hawai'i System

HB 934 HD1 SD1 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i, representing the interests of the State in the implementation of federally funded broadband investments, supports HB 934 HD1 SD1 which transfers the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office (HBDEO) from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT) to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services (ETS) in the Department of Accounting and General Services, and establishes the Hawai'i Broadband Revolving Fund. Transfer of the HBDEO under ETS, would place it within the management and oversight of the State Chief Information Officer, and will properly align the functions of the HBDEO together with other statewide technology infrastructure oversight, management and operations. The measure additionally provides for appropriate governance under the statutorily established Information Technology Steering Committee.

Establishment of the Hawai'i Broadband Revolving Fund provides for the ability to collect and expend funds received as a beneficial outcome of the public investment in broadband infrastructure assets; and to ensure the funds are used to support long term sustainability of the state's broadband infrastructure assets and the ability of our community to benefit from those infrastructure assets. Placing the ownership of the assets resulting from the federal broadband investments under the State Chief Information Officer, together with the oversight assistance of the Information Technology Steering Committee, will help to ensure the public's interest is protected and the benefits to Hawai'i maximized over the lifetime of these assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 934 HD1 SD1.



Charter Communications
Testimony of Rebecca Lieberman, Director of Government Affairs

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Hawaii State Capitol
Tuesday, April 1, 2025

SUPPORT FOR H.B. 934, H.D. 1, S.D. 1 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B. 934, H.D. 1, S.D. 1, a bill that would transfer the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office (HBDEO) to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services and establishes the Broadband Revolving Fund.

As the largest broadband provider in the state, Charter supports efforts to promote digital equity and broadband access. A key aspect of reducing the digital divide is by investing in broadband infrastructure, digital navigators and literacy tools, affordability programs, and access to hardware.

Charter believes that every Hawaii resident should have reliable access to the Internet. We will continue to help bring the benefits of broadband and access to the internet to those who need it most. Hawaii is slated to receive over \$200 million in federal grants for broadband infrastructure in the immediate future (via the Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program), in addition to private investments already being made by the industry. The Broadband and Digital Equity Special Fund should prioritize funding projects related to broadband adoption and affordability programs, rather than retail infrastructure projects, which are separately supported by federal funding.

We are grateful to Rep Ilagan for incorporating our previously requested amendment into the bill. Charter spoke with HBDEO staff, and we believe that the bill, as written, is in line with HBDEO's goals, which is to support community anchor institutions, digital navigators and literacy tools, affordability programs, and access to hardware.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide proposed amendments to H.B. 934, H.D. 1, S.D. 1.



**WAIANAЕ COAST
COMPREHENSIVE
HEALTH CENTER**

April 1, 2025 at 10:01AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 221 & Videoconference

COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

**To: Chair Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz
Vice Chair Sharon Y. Moriwaki**

**From: Michele Chrissy Kuahine
Director of Tech Equity**

**RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 934 HD1 SD1 - RELATING TO THE
HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE**

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means,

The Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center (WCCHC) strongly **supports, with amendments HB934 HD1 SD1**, particularly the transition of the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office to the Department of Technology and Innovation. However, we are concerned with the language added in the bill's prior version, in **Section 27E Broadband Revolving Fund item b1**, which reads:

“Supporting broadband projects, excluding the deployment of broadband infrastructure for the provision of retail service;”

We respectfully **request the removal of this language**: “*excluding the deployment of broadband infrastructure for the provision of retail service;*” to restore the bill's original intent.

The added language conflicts with the **State's objectives and policies** outlined in the bill. According to **Section 27C**, the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office has the duty to:

1. Develop and implement strategies to aggressively increase broadband affordability, penetration, and competitive availability in the state; and
2. Support efforts of both public and private entities to enhance or facilitate the deployment of broadband services, including competitively priced, advanced electronic communications services and internet access services throughout the state.

The language “excluding the deployment of broadband infrastructure for the provision of retail service” is unnecessary. Community broadband systems are small-scale and non-competitive to fiber ISPs, as evidenced by their exclusion from BEAD funding. These systems serve critical gaps where traditional ISPs will not invest, specifically for unsheltered populations and those living at or below the poverty level—over 70% of WCCHC's patients.



**WAIANAЕ COAST
COMPREHENSIVE
HEALTH CENTER**

Much like our concerns last year with **HB2359**, where we requested a veto due to similar language, the bill in its current form limits broadband deployment to the benefit of private interests over the public good, ultimately disadvantaging local communities.

We respectfully urge the committee to **remove restrictive language** to better align with the State's objectives, ensuring all individuals and communities, particularly those in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas, have access to the technology needed to fully participate in society, democracy, the economy, and, most importantly, health equity, including equitable access to telehealth and healthcare services.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in **support with amendments on HB934 HD1 SD1**.

1961 Aamaka Pl.
Pearl City, HI 96782
808-462-8356, dancsmith@rocketmail.com

March 30, 2025

Committee on Ways and Means
The Senate
Capitol
Honolulu, Hawaii

Re: Hearing April 1, 2025 on HB934 SD1

Aloha Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee Members:

I write in strong support of HB934 SD1 and the funding level you deem appropriate taking into account the requests of the Office of Enterprise Technology Services. The centralization of broadband responsibilities is a smart move.

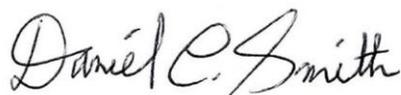
However, I strongly recommend one amendment. On Page 6, Line 7, please restore the original bill's language, specifically to say:

(1) Supporting broadband projects;

The change in HD1, prohibiting the provision of retail service, was made at the request of Charter Communications. Possible interpretations of Charter's language could prevent even small, innovative projects, such as hybrid fiber-satellite – in remote, unserved or underserved communities. Giant corporation Charter would not be significantly harmed by a modest group of homes not being available to them. Ironically, the language could also prohibit a project that delivers customers to Charter. The concerns of the Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center are valid, in my opinion

Please pass HB934 SD1, and if you agree, with the recommended restored language as described above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Daniel C. Smith".

Daniel C. Smith, PhD

Testimony of Sean Taketa McLaughlin
Hawaii' Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Tuesday April 1, 2025 at 10:01am

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB934 SD1 RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Moriwaki and Members of the Committee:

Digital equity is about more than internet access. That is why the State's efforts to address local needs are so important - from Connect Kakou to the Broadband Hui. The Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office has moved forward with integrity. Boosting their efforts is a worthy goal.

In our information ecosystem, broadband internet service includes our access to dominant media platforms and to connections that help us meet our most basic communication needs. The Hawai'i Broadband Hui named the local values to guide our efforts as "*Digital Pili*na," to express the fundamental goal of our collective efforts - connection.

Starting with legacy analog networks to connect individuals with each other - helping us to understand the world in our particular cultural and social context. Nowadays, we also rely upon broadband networks for essential information to meet local needs for: public health & safety; education; community based economic development; culture & arts; and civic engagement.

Given the history of market failure that has resulted in a "digital divide" and clear inequity, public policy must address these needs through Federal, State and local regulatory processes. This bill can help to balance the ledger of corporate profits that come at the expense of local people.

Increasingly, networks are not locally owned, not transparent, not accountable and not effectively regulated by the Federal, State or County governments. The original social contracts these networks had negotiated with the State through regulatory processes of the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (DCCA) included universal service obligations, consumer protections and public interest benefits to ensure that local needs and interests were met with reliable, ethical and affordable services. Today, just a hollowing shell of that social contract remains - with consumer protections and public interests unrepresented and largely forgotten.

A glance at the statutory obligations of DCCA that are being stricken by HB934 clearly shows the abject failure of DCCA to fulfill their duties to consumers and the public interest. So, this reform of State efforts is more important than it appears and clearly just a first step in a long process to reclaim the integrity of Hawaii's information ecosystem.

Sean Taketa McLaughlin
seantaketa@gmail.com, C: 808-595-4877