



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

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislature, State of Hawaii  
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
February 11, 2025

Testimony on  
**S.B. 1061 – RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of S.B. 1061. We respectfully request that the Committee also consider incorporating additional provisions contained in S.B. 1045.**

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 this once-in-a-generation funding commitment, it is crucial that our state broadband policies and programs are comprehensive and holistic. While S.B. 1061 establishes funds for a digital navigator pilot program, S.B. 1045 goes further by allocating federal funding for digital navigators, transferring the 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, creating a Broadband Infrastructure Special Fund, and consolidating various broadband functions throughout state government.

As broadband becomes increasingly essential in our daily lives, transferring the Broadband Office provides an opportunity to centralize broadband responsibilities currently spread across state agencies, including the duties of the Director of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs and the Hawaii Broadband Assistance Advisory Council. Our office will work closely with the relevant departments to compile all broadband functions for the Legislature's consideration. Additionally, with the construction of new subsea broadband infrastructure, our state expects to generate revenue from negotiated lease agreements. Creating a special fund will ensure these revenues are used to lower the cost of internet services, provide technical assistance to communities, and support broadband projects.



**UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

**‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII**

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Tourism  
Tuesday, February 11, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

By

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

SB 1061 – RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, 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 the intent of SB 1061 to establish and fund a digital navigator pilot program to offer technical assistance with computers and electronic devices to residents. Support to grow the digital literacy and readiness for all of Hawai'i's residents is key to the Connect Kakou statewide initiative.

The current plan for the state's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Broadband, Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) program, includes funding to initiate and deploy, a statewide Community Digital Navigator program, in partnership with the Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS). The program is in its startup phase now, and we anticipate initial services being available from an initial set of HSPLS branches before the end of the calendar year.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on SB 1061.



BILL No:SB1061  
Individual: Rosie F Davis

**In Support and Testimony Letter Regarding SB1061**

**COMMITTEE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT and TOURISM**

Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair

February 10, 2025

Aloha Senator Chair DeCoite

I support this bill SB1061, and would like to include Molokai and Lanai in this bill.

Molokai and Lanai would benefit from appropriation of funds for a digital navigator pilot program to offer technical assistance with computers and electronic devices to residents

Over the past four years we have established digital education and partner with other organization's and agencies to support Molokai community members. Lanai would benefit as well for their community.

I appreciate your time and support, and please pass this bill SB1061

Mahalo nui, Rosie