

MAR 09 2021

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# SENATE RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS TO  
ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP FUNDING SOURCES FOR  
RURAL BROADBAND IMPROVEMENTS.

1           WHEREAS, broadband connectivity is the critical  
2 infrastructure of the 21st century, and as such the State  
3 recognizes robust broadband infrastructure as foundational to  
4 Hawaii's economic future and, as importantly, the quality of  
5 life of all its residents; and  
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7           WHEREAS, in 2012 the state broadband strategic plan was  
8 developed to provide information and a framework for the  
9 creation of policies and programs to address the challenges  
10 faced in meeting both state and national broadband goals. The  
11 plan supported grant-seeking at the state and county levels to  
12 implement the recommended policies, programs, and activities to  
13 advance broadband access and use statewide; and  
14

15           WHEREAS, the economic and business incentives to deploy  
16 broadband infrastructure continue to be insufficient to ensure  
17 full access to broadband services in low-density, rural  
18 locations, and other unserved and underserved areas of the  
19 State; and  
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21           WHEREAS, economically feasible deployment of infrastructure  
22 for high-speed broadband across the State, especially to low  
23 population density areas, presents a formidable challenge  
24 because the unit costs of providing broadband service may not  
25 provide an adequate return on investment; and  
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27           WHEREAS, the unique geography of the State prevents the use  
28 of less costly options than broadband services for connectivity  
29 by rural areas; and  
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31           WHEREAS, in March 2020, the coronavirus disease 2019 was  
32 detected in the state, upending all that residents knew as  
33 normal. Governor Ige was joined by the Mayors from all four  
34 counties in mandating restrictions and policies on operations,  
35 travel between the islands, and work-from-home policies; and



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2 WHEREAS, the drastic and sudden change required leaders and  
3 managers in government, business, education, and nonprofits to  
4 expeditiously address functions and communications to perform  
5 their duties in a virtual mode; and  
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7 WHEREAS, the pandemic and its broad adverse economic impact  
8 underscored that access to broadband services in unserved and  
9 underserved areas of Hawaii would enhance economic development,  
10 education, healthcare, public safety, and emergency services in  
11 those areas; and  
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13 WHEREAS, with thousands in the State forced to function  
14 from residences, workers relied on the quality of their internet  
15 connections for access to virtual communications; and  
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17 WHEREAS, in establishing distance learning procedures,  
18 public and private schools soon discovered that pockets of  
19 students needed tailored solutions for access to hardware and to  
20 Wi-Fi; and  
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22 WHEREAS, while nonprofits adjusted annual plans to  
23 effectively serve their target populations virtually and the  
24 State relied on social media and websites to keep constituents  
25 informed on the latest developments and public health  
26 procedures, the common thread was broadband access, and the  
27 dependence on access to broadband infrastructure; and  
28

29 WHEREAS, although broadband coverage in the State is  
30 widespread, additional investment must be made to respond to the  
31 needs of rural and low-income communities to bridge the digital  
32 divide; now, therefore,  
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34 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first  
35 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021,  
36 that the Department of Business, Economic Development and  
37 Tourism is requested to establish a working group to facilitate  
38 the development of funding sources to increase broadband  
39 infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas of Hawaii, by  
40 identifying and addressing remaining obstacles to full  
41 deployment of broadband infrastructure to all areas of Hawaii;  
42 and



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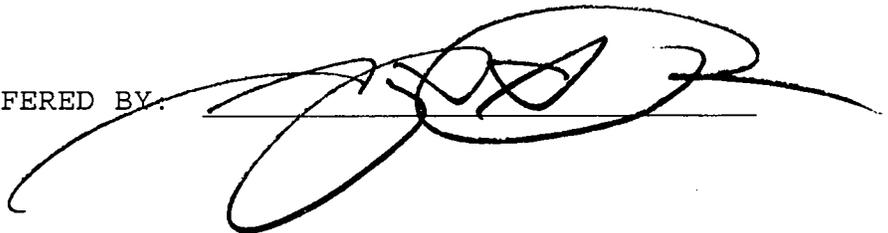
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the working group is urged to consist of:

- (1) The Director of Business, Economic Development and Tourism, to serve as the chair;
- (2) One member of the Senate, to be appointed by the President of the Senate;
- (3) One member of the House of Representatives, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
- (4) One representative of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs Cable Television Division; and
- (5) At least one representative from Charter Spectrum Communications, Hawaiian Telcom, or other Hawaii broadband internet service provider; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the rural broadband working group is requested to submit a report of its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of the Regular Session of 2023; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Governor; Director of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; and Director of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

OFFERED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, written over a horizontal line. The signature is highly cursive and loops around itself.