
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND
TOURISM 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
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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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1 WHEREAS, in March 2020, the coronavirus disease 2019 was
2 detected in the State, upending all that residents knew as
3 normal. Governor Ige was joined by the Mayors from all four
4 counties in mandating restrictions and policies on operations,
5 travel between the islands, and work-from-home policies; and
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7 WHEREAS, the drastic and sudden change required leaders and
8 managers in government, business, education, and nonprofits to
9 expeditiously address functions and communications to perform
10 their duties in a virtual mode; and
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12 WHEREAS, the pandemic and its broad adverse economic impact
13 underscored that access to broadband services in unserved and
14 underserved areas of Hawaii would enhance economic development,
15 education, healthcare, public safety, and emergency services in
16 those areas; and
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18 WHEREAS, with thousands in the State forced to function
19 from residences, workers relied on the quality of their internet
20 connections for access to virtual communications; and
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22 WHEREAS, in establishing distance learning procedures,
23 public and private schools soon discovered that pockets of
24 students needed tailored solutions for access to hardware and to
25 Wi-Fi; and
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27 WHEREAS, while nonprofits adjusted annual plans to
28 effectively serve their target populations virtually and the
29 State relied on social media and websites to keep constituents
30 informed on the latest developments and public health
31 procedures, the common thread was broadband access, and the
32 dependence on access to broadband infrastructure; and
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34 WHEREAS, although broadband coverage in the State is
35 widespread, additional investment must be made to respond to the
36 needs of rural and low-income communities to bridge the digital
37 divide; now, therefore,
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39 BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Thirty-first
40 Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2021, the
41 House of Representatives concurring, that the Department of
42 Business, Economic Development and Tourism is requested to



1 establish a working group to facilitate the development of
2 funding sources to increase broadband infrastructure in unserved
3 and underserved areas of Hawaii, by identifying and addressing
4 remaining obstacles to full deployment of broadband
5 infrastructure to all areas of Hawaii; and
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7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the working group is urged to
8 consist of the following members:
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10 (1) The Director of Business, Economic Development and
11 Tourism, to serve as the chair;
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13 (2) One member of the Senate, to be appointed by the
14 President of the Senate;
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16 (3) One member of the House of Representatives, to be
17 appointed by the Speaker of the House of
18 Representatives;
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20 (4) One representative of the Department of Commerce and
21 Consumer Affairs; and
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23 (5) At least one representative from Charter Spectrum
24 Communications, Hawaiian Telcom, or other Hawaii
25 broadband internet service provider who is requested
26 to be invited by the chair; and
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28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the rural broadband working
29 group is requested to submit a report of its findings and
30 recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the
31 Legislature no later than twenty days prior to the convening of
32 the Regular Session of 2023; and
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34 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this
35 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Director of
36 Business, Economic Development and Tourism; President of the
37 Senate; Speaker of the House of Representatives; and Director of
38 Commerce and Consumer Affairs.

