



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

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AMENDED

Statement of
MIKE MCCARTNEY
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR, CULTURE AND THE ARTS

Monday, April 4, 2022

3:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 225

In consideration of

SCR25 / SR19

**RECOGNIZING OCTOBER 3 THROUGH OCTOBER 7, 2022, AS DIGITAL
INCLUSION WEEK IN THE STATE OF HAWAII.**

Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports SCR25 / SR19** that recognizes October 3 through October 7, 2022, as Digital Inclusion Week in the State of Hawaii.

The COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the need for broadband infrastructure and digital equity across all of Hawaii's residents especially those in rural unserved and underserved communities.

It is important that we recognize the digital inclusion work that is being done by the Broadband Hui and other community stakeholders as we strive to meet the goals set forth in the Digital Equity Declaration.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



Senate Committee on Labor, Culture and the Arts

Date: April 4, 2022

Time: 3 p.m.

Where: Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

RE: **Supporting SCR25/SR19** Recognizing October 3 through October 7, 2022, as Digital Inclusion Week in the State of Hawaii.

Aloha mai e Chair Taniguchi, Vice Chair Ihara, and Members of the Committee,

As members of the Broadband Hui, the listed organizations and individuals **SUPPORT SCR/SR19**, a resolution recognizing October 3 through October 7, 2022, as Digital Inclusion Week in the State of Hawaii.

Over the past 18 months, our organizations have collaborated, each within their own ability, to increase Hawai'i's digital capacity, thereby supporting the continuity of social connections, education, employment, and access to other essential services throughout the pandemic.

Through the work of the Broadband Hui, we have supported broadband infrastructure development in rural communities, provided digital devices for students and families, supported the accessibility of telehealth, provided information on low-cost internet options, and adopted a Digital Equity Declaration to set a vision and goals for a more equitable digital future.

As we stated at the outset of the pandemic, addressing digital inequity through broadband access, digital literacy, and digitally-enabled societal systems is one of our greatest opportunities for economic and social recovery, diversification, and resilience. However, closing the digital divide must be a full-community effort, as this work cannot sit in silos. To that end, the statewide celebration of Digital Inclusion Week will put a much-needed spotlight on what needs to happen in order for all Hawaii residents, especially the most vulnerable, to experience the clear benefits of digital access and equity.

For these reasons, we kindly request you pass **SCR25/SR19**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

(Please see names on the following page.)

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