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# A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO BROADBAND SERVICE INFRASTRUCTURE.

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

1           SECTION 1. The legislature finds that the provision of  
2 equitable and robust access to broadband continues to be among  
3 the State's most pressing challenges. Hawaii needs to invest in  
4 open access, carrier-neutral cable landing infrastructure to  
5 attract transpacific fiber optic cable companies and expand its  
6 fiber connectivity to the world and throughout the islands,  
7 particularly in rural, underserved, and unserved communities, to  
8 achieve the digital equity necessary to build a resilient  
9 digital economy. Attracting partners with the necessary  
10 technical expertise and resources can develop Hawaii into a  
11 strategic communications and knowledge hub in the Pacific. This  
12 hub would incorporate a robust global communications network and  
13 provide cloud platforms to establish next generation  
14 applications, such as artificial intelligence and smart  
15 communities, in Hawaii.

16           The legislature further finds that to build a robust  
17 broadband infrastructure, the State must act quickly to take



1 advantage of various federal and private funds available this  
2 year. For example, the 2021 federal Consolidated Appropriations  
3 Act earmarks:

4 (1) At least \$30,000,000 for the department of Hawaiian  
5 home lands;

6 (2) \$3,200,000,000 nationally in an emergency broadband  
7 benefit for low-income Americans to become connected  
8 or remain connected to broadband;

9 (3) \$250,000,000 nationally for a new telehealth pilot  
10 program;

11 (4) \$300,000,000 for a national grant program to fund  
12 broadband in rural areas; and

13 (5) \$65,000,000 for the improvement of the nation's  
14 broadband maps.

15 The legislature notes that the first phase of deployment of  
16 these federal funds, in part, supports the South American  
17 Pacific Link, a transpacific fiber cable project that would  
18 connect Hawaii to South America, Central America, and the east  
19 coast of the continental United States. Additionally, over  
20 \$100,000,000 is available from the United States Department of  
21 Transportation Federal Highway Administration to address the



1 broadband capacity to support telecommuting through pilot  
2 projects focused on building broadband infrastructure.

3 Accordingly, the purpose of this Act is to ensure that the  
4 State takes full advantage of available funds to build and  
5 maintain the broadband infrastructure necessary to sustain  
6 interconnectivity throughout islands by:

7 (1) Requiring the University of Hawaii and Hawaii  
8 broadband and digital equity office to convene a  
9 working group; and

10 (2) Appropriating funds to the University of Hawaii for  
11 the administration of the working group.

12 SECTION 2. (a) The University of Hawaii and Hawaii  
13 broadband and digital equity office shall jointly convene a  
14 working group to determine the appropriate governance structure  
15 to implement, operate, and maintain broadband infrastructure  
16 development in the State.

17 (b) The working group shall consist of the following  
18 members, or their designees:

19 (1) The president of the University of Hawaii, who shall  
20 serve as co-chair;



- 1           (2) The strategic broadband coordinator, who shall serve
- 2                   as co-chair;
- 3           (3) The director of finance;
- 4           (4) The director of commerce and consumer affairs;
- 5           (5) The comptroller;
- 6           (6) The director of business, economic development, and
- 7                   tourism;
- 8           (7) The chairperson of the Hawaiian homes commission; and
- 9           (8) The mayors of the counties.
- 10          (c) The co-chairs of the working group shall invite the
- 11 following individuals to become members of the working group:
- 12          (1) The governor;
- 13          (2) The State's congressional delegation;
- 14          (3) Representatives from private sector partners; and
- 15          (4) Others as recommended by the working group.
- 16          (d) The working group shall:
- 17               (1) Provide recommendations for an appropriate governing
- 18                   body to oversee and maintain the State's strategic
- 19                   broadband infrastructure assets;
- 20               (2) Consider the technical, operational, maintenance, and
- 21                   financial sustainability of broadband infrastructure



1 development for services that are robust, resilient  
2 and affordable;

3 (3) Consult with subject matter experts in finance,  
4 telecommunications, regulatory bodies, and any other  
5 areas as it deems necessary; and

6 (4) Identify revenue sources to sustain the operation and  
7 maintenance costs of broadband infrastructure and  
8 assets, including landing fees, fiber cross-connects,  
9 and infeasible rights of use for terrestrial fiber.

10 (e) Members of the working group shall serve without  
11 compensation but shall be reimbursed for reasonable expenses  
12 necessary for the performance of their duties, including travel  
13 expenses. No member of the working group shall be subject to  
14 chapter 84, Hawaii Revised Statutes, solely because of the  
15 member's participation in the working group.

16 (f) The working group shall submit a report of its  
17 findings and recommendations, including any proposed  
18 legislation, to the legislature no later than twenty days prior  
19 to the convening of the regular session of 2024.

20 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general  
21 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so



1 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2022-2023 for  
2 the administration of the working group in section 2 of this  
3 Act.

4 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the University of  
5 Hawaii for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.

7



S.B. NO. 2076  
S.D. 2  
H.D. 3

**Report Title:**

University of Hawaii; Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office; Broadband; Working Group; Appropriation

**Description:**

Requires UH and the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office to convene a working group to determine the appropriate governance structure to operate, maintain, and oversee broadband assets. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/2050. (HD3)

*The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.*

