

OFFICE OF INFORMATION PRACTICES

STATE OF HAWAII
NO. 1 CAPITOL DISTRICT BUILDING
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To: House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

From: Cheryl Kakazu Park, Director

Date: February 16, 2023, 2:00 p.m.
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

Re: Testimony on H.B. No. 1408, H.D. 1
Relating to Digital Equity

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this bill, which would establish a Digital Equity Grant Program. The Office of Information Practices (OIP) takes no position on the substance of this bill, but testified previously to suggest an amendment to a confidentiality provision. **OIP's recommended amendment was made by the House Committee on Higher Education & Technology, and OIP has no further concerns with this bill.**

Thank you for considering OIP's testimony.



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

CHRIS J. SADAYASU
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

No. 1 Capitol District Building, 250 South Hotel Street, 5th Floor, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
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Statement of
CHRIS J. SADAYASU
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Thursday, February 16, 2023
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329

In consideration of
HB 1408, HD1
RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY.

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports HB1408, HD1** that establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

Over the course of the last three years, the COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the need for digital equity for all of Hawai'i's residents. In the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (2022) the federal government recognized the importance of digital equity and created several programs including the Digital Equity Planning Grant and the Digital Equity Capacity Grant program. There is a one-year period for the development of the statewide digital equity plan at which point the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) will issue their notice of funding opportunity for the capacity grants.

The digital equity grant program created by HB 1408, HD1 will not only help to fund and build capacity in Hawai'i's communities, both urban and rural, sooner than the federal programs but it can also be applied specifically to the needs of the smaller frontline organizations, be more flexible and meet the local priorities in addressing issues of digital adoption, affordability, navigation, literacy, access to devices, emergency response, translation services, etc.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION
COMMISSION
POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Co-Chairs:
Chair, DLNR
Director, OPSD

Commissioners:
Chair, Senate AEN
Chair, Senate WTL
Chair, House EEP
Chair, House WAL
Chairperson, HTA
Chairperson, DOA
CEO, OHA
Chairperson, DHHL
Director, DBEDT
Director, DOT
Director, DOH
Chairperson, DOE
Director, C+C DPP
Director, Maui DP
Director, Hawai'i DP
Director, Kaua'i DP
The Adjutant General
Manager, CZM

**Testimony of
Leah Laramee
Coordinator, Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission**

**Before the House Committee on
CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE**

**Thursday, February 16, 2023
2:00 PM**

State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 329

**In support of
House Bill 1408 House Draft 1
RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

House Bill 1408 HD1 establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State and awards funds. **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure.**

Hawai'i's Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission recognizes that ground transportation contributes significantly to Hawai'i's share of greenhouse gas emissions. Both the digital divide and the climate crisis are global issues that have a disproportionate impact on low- and middle-income families. Sustainably closing the internet connectivity and usage gaps in low- and middle-income markets can also help in the fight against global warming.

Helping as many people as possible to connect to digital resources can also have transformative societal and environmental benefits, on both a local and global scale. According to a 2019 report by the Department of Agriculture, deploying universal broadband can create an extra \$47-\$65 billion each year for the U.S. economy. In the agriculture sector, farmers could significantly reduce their costs through the use of precision technology; for example, yield monitoring could save farmers \$25 per acre in input costs and weather modeling could prevent an average of \$264,000 per year in specialty crop loss per farmer. At the household level, deployment of universal broadband together with digital energy efficiency technologies is estimated to lower residential electricity bills by as much as one-fifth. The Digital Equity Grant Program is a good first step in achieving an equitable resilient future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
February 16, 2023

The Honorable Representative Mark M. Nakashima, Chair
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
The Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Representative Nakashima and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB1408 HD1 Relating to Broadband

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS HB1408 HD1**, which Establishes the digital equity grant program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State. Appropriates funds.

Technology has become vital for our Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) population to live independently. However, broadband access is key for most new technologies relying on Wi-Fi. Individuals with I/DD who are dependent on others to assist them with their mobility can reach a greater level of independence if they have reliable access to internet services. Internet access allows individuals from their homes to independently access telehealth services, virtual meetings, legislative hearings, and other state programs that require computer access.

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. Funding remains a high need to continue to provide individuals we serve with affordable internet access. We are hopeful that digital equity will come with the passing of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of HB1408 HD1**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce
Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 2:00 p.m.

By

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

HB 1408 HD1 – RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i, representing the State's broadband interests, supports the intent of HB 1408 HD1.

The proposed state digital equity grant program along with state funding support would provide needed funding opportunities to support digital equity efforts that would directly benefit communities with the greatest needs. Based on the proposed timing, this program would provide funding opportunities in advance of the anticipated National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) State Digital Equity Capacity Grant program, and could be used to accelerate the delivery of digital equity and literacy benefits to our communities.

We would recommend that the efforts be fully coordinated with other statewide digital equity efforts, including the state's digital equity plan, the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Five-Year Plan, and work funded under the Tribal Broadband Connectivity program with DHHL (all three efforts funded by NTIA).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1408 HD1.



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The State Legislature
The House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Thursday, February 16, 2023
Conference Room 329, 2:00 p.m.

TO: The Honorable Mark Nakashima, Chair
RE: Support for H.B. 1408, HD 1 Relating to Digital Equity

Aloha Chair Nakashima and Members of the Committees:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social mission organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 140,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families, including telehealth. **AARP supports H.B. 1408 HD1** which establishes the digital equity grant program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

The pandemic has underscored vast disparities in high-speed internet access and has also underscored the importance of high-speed internet access to older adults. Achieving digital equity is especially important for older adults: reliable, affordable high-speed internet access is critical to the well-being of adults (e.g., telehealth, connection to family and friends, civic engagement, distance learning, remote work, etc.) AARP recognizes the value and significant benefits of digital technology that can improve the lives of kupuna. While more and more of our members, especially those aged 50-59, are using their mobile devices and tablets to access information about their health, we still need to reach those over the age 65 whose technology adoption rate is only 64%. Achieving digital equity requires addressing disparities in access and adoption. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B 1408, HD1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keali'i S. Lopez".

Keali'i S. López
State Director



Charter Communications
Testimony of Rebecca Lieberman, Director of Government Affairs

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Hawaii State Capitol
Thursday, February 16, 2023

COMMENTS ON H.B. 1408, H.D. 1 – RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on H.B. 1408, H.D. 1, a bill that would establish the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects.

As the largest broadband provider in the state, Charter supports efforts to promote digital equity and broadband access and we **support the intent of this bill**. A key aspect of reducing the digital divide is by investing in broadband infrastructure, digital navigators and literacy tools, affordability programs, and access to hardware.

Charter believes that every Hawaii resident should have reliable access to the Internet. We will continue to help bring the benefits of broadband and access to the internet to those who need it most. Hawaii is slated to receive over \$200 million in federal grants for broadband infrastructure in the immediate future (via the Coronavirus Capital Project Fund and Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment Program), in addition to private investments already being made by the industry. The

Digital Equity Grant Program should prioritize funding projects related to broadband adoption and affordability programs, which are separately supported by federal funding.

With this in mind, Charter requests amending the bill to better define the scope of approved projects and exclude broadband infrastructure projects from the program. This will ensure that broadband adoption efforts and broadband availability efforts are each given the independent attention needed to properly address these very different issues. Infrastructure availability and digital equity are both important, but they are different problems requiring different, independent solutions. Specifically, we suggest the following technical amendments, which were accepted by the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism for S.B. 1231, S.D. 1, the companion of H.B. 1408:

- Page 3, Section 1, Line 1, insert the following new language:

“Broadband infrastructure” means the medium used to provide broadband service, including fiber optic cable, copper cable, coaxial cable, and wireless media, such as satellite communications, wireless networks, and worldwide interoperability for microwave access.

- Page 4, Section 3, Lines 19-21 shall be amended to read as follows:

-3 Eligible projects. To be eligible for a grant, the area to be served by the project shall include covered populations on the date the application is submitted. Projects that include the deployment of broadband infrastructure are ineligible.

In 2021 alone, Charter extended its network to reach an additional 20,000 homes and small businesses in Hawaii, investing more than \$106 million in the state. Additionally, Charter is pleased to now provide high-speed data services to beneficiaries living in the Hawaiian Homelands following an announcement by DHHL, which allows homesteaders to obtain telecommunications services from a provider of their choice.

Charter is a member of DBEDT's weekly Broadband Hui to assist in strategic broadband planning and closing the digital divide. Additionally, Charter participated in the FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB) and is now participating in the \$14.2 billion federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The EBB, and now the ACP, has helped connect over 38,000 eligible households in Hawaii with high-speed broadband during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Broadband internet access is more important than ever and the ACP offers a tremendous opportunity to help low-income families stay connected, providing eligible households a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service and up to \$75 per month for households on the Hawaiian Home Lands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide suggested amendments to H.B. 1408, H.D 1.

February 15, 2023

Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
Representative Mark M. Nakashima, Chair,
Representative Jackson D. Sayama, Vice Chair



Working together for Kapolei

Thursday, February 16, 2023, 2:00 p.m.
Conference Rm. 329 and via Videoconference

RE: HB 1408 HD1 RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY

Dear Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama and members of the Committee:

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for businesses in the Kapolei region which includes Waipahu to Ka'ena Point. The Chamber works on behalf of its members and the entire business community to improve the regional and State economic climate and help Kapolei businesses thrive. We are a member-driven, member-supported organization representing the interests of all types of business: small, medium or large, for profit or non-profit businesses or sole proprietorship.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is in strong support of HB 1408 HD1, relating to Digital Equity which establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects.

This funding would support and adopt the goals set forth in the State's Digital Equity Declaration. The Digital Equity Grant Program will help to ensure digital literacy and equitable access to internet to help eliminate the "digital divide" and help our underserved communities including those in West O'ahu.

We also need to increase digital capacity in West O'ahu for our small businesses to spur on economic growth and bridge some of the gaps existing today including access and capacity issues with online learning, pursuit of employment opportunities, and access to essential services online.

The need for digital equity is apparent even in the City and County of Honolulu and is not only applicable to rural areas of our state. West O'ahu's growing population of almost 200,000 includes the Wai'anae Coast, 'Ewa, and Waipahu. In Kapolei and 'Ewa alone households are expected to exceed 56,000 by the year 2035 and over the next 30 years the population in Kapolei and 'Ewa will increase by 40 percent and housing by 52 percent. The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population in East Honolulu is 3.4% and 39.7% in Wai'anae. The number of persons living in poverty in Wai'anae is 24.4%.

The funding provided in this grant is needed now and will support community-based organizations and non-profits to do the work needing to be done to provide digital equity until federal funding becomes available.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony and comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Polk".

Kiran Polk
Executive Director

1001 Kamokila Boulevard, Campbell Building Suite 250, Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

Written Statement of
Jeannine Souki
Sr. Manager – Government & Regulatory Affairs

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

February 16, 2023, 2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329, Videoconference

**SUPPORT FOR:
H.B. 1408, HD1 – RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

To: Chair Nakashima, Vice-Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee

Re: **Testimony providing support for HB 1408, HD1**

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit support for House Bill 1408, HD1, to establish a Digital Equity grant program within the Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism's Broadband and Digital Equity Office.

Hawaiian Telcom supports establishing a state grant program dedicated to improving digital equity for residents and businesses. The purpose of the grant should be focused to stand up programs such as training digital navigators to address obstacles to digital equity and to help qualify households to participate in the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and digital literacy services that develop capacity for residents and businesses to participate in a rapidly accelerating digital economy.

Hawaiian Telcom has a significant role in building our high-speed broadband network and continues to invest hundreds of millions of dollars annually to improve our state's broadband infrastructure. In addition, Hawaiian Telcom is addressing digital equity needs by participating in ACP and Lifeline programs that offer discounted services for qualified residents. ACP-eligible households receive essentially free internet services with a discount of up to \$30 per month. Internet services up to \$75 per month are provided for ACP-eligible beneficiaries in Hawaiian Homelands.

While there is a temporary infusion of federal funds for broadband infrastructure and services and digital equity programs through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) programs, we urge the state to leverage opportunities for public and private sector investments to close the digital divide, especially in unserved and underserved areas.

We appreciate the opportunity to support HB 1408, HD1.

House Committee on Consumer Protection & Commerce

Date: February 16, 2023
Time: 2:00 p.m.
Where: State Capitol, Conference Room 329
RE: Supporting HB 1408 Relating to Digital Equity

Aloha mai e Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Sayama, and Members of the Committee,

As members of the Broadband Hui, the listed organizations and individuals SUPPORT HB 1408 HD1, which establishes the Digital Equity Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects.

Over the past two years, 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.

One of the components critical to the progress of digital equity for our community is that of funding capacity sooner than the federal programs which this bill aims to address. **Work to continue to address these needs are now. This funding will be targeted to support Hawaii's local, community non-profits to maintain its momentum on digital equity until federal funding becomes available.**

For these reasons, we kindly request you support HB1408. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. (Please see names on the following page.)

Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HB1408 HD1

Logos of Supporting Organizations



Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HB1408 HD1

Name	Organization	Email	Zip code
Ken Farm		farmk@hawaii.edu	96817
Lynn Otaguro	O`ahu County Democrats Digital Equity Committee	lmotaguro@yahoo.com	96821
Angelina Mercado	Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence	amercado@hscadv.org	98614
DOUGLASS S ADAMS	County of Hawaii Dept of Research & Development	douglass.adams@hawaiicounty.gov	96720
Jill Takasaki Canfield	Hawaii Literacy	jill.takasaki.canfield@hawaiiliteracy.org	96817
Kaleo Bennett	'Auamo Collaborative	kokua@auamocollaborative.org	96720
Mayson Asano Jr		molokaishaka@yahoo.com	96748
Nicholas Winfrey	Maui United Way	nicholas@mauiunitedway.org	96708
Peter Dames	Servco Pacific Inc	peter.dames@servco.com	96814
WANDA ANAE-ONISHI		wanaeonishi@gmail.com	96797
Riley Saito	Succeed Hawaii, LLC	rsaito@succeedhawaii.com	96740
David Sun-Miyashiro	HawaiiKidsCAN	david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org	96814
Jaclyn Kaina	Kauai Economic Development Board	jkaina@kedb.com	96766
Matt Stevens	Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative	matt@hawaiiwork.org	96755
Herb Lee, Jr.	Pacific American Foundation	herblee@thepaf.org	96734
Alexis Ching		alexis@ewaluindustries.org	96740
Nathan Prescott	County of Kauai - Office of Economic Development	nprescott@kauai.gov	96766
Rachel Solemsaas	Hawai'i Community College	rsolems@hawaii.edu	96720
Mary Oneha	Waimanalo Health Center	moneha@waimanalohealth.org	96795
LORNA STRAND		LORNA.STRAND@GMAIL.COM	96701
David Earles	Junior Achievement of Hawaii	david@jahawaii.org	96815
Deborah Bond-Upson	LearningBond	deborah@learningbond.org	96734
Wayne Buente		wayne.buente@gmail.com	96826
Ka'ala Souza	Digital Ready Hawaii	kaala@digitalreadyhawaii.org	96734
Jeanne Skog	Skog Rasmussen LLC	jskog@skograsmussen.com	96793
Georgette Stevens	'Ōlelo Community Media	gstevens@olelo.org	96819
Joseph Passantino	Ke'elikolani Middle School	Joseph.passantino@k12.hi.us	96813
Jay April, President & CEO	Akaku Maui County Community Media	jay@akaku.org	96732
Jeanne Skog	Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii	jskog2435@gmail.com	96708
Kiran Polk	Kapolei Chamber of Commerce	kiranpolk@gmail.com	96707

Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HB1408 HD1

Name	Organization	Email	Zip code
Keilee Simms		keilees@keyproject.org	96744
Judith Mikami	Molokai Rural Health Community Association	jmikami44@gmail.com	96748
Gregory DiBenedetto		gregdib@yahoo.com	96778
Dr. Adrienne Dillard, Ph.D., MSW, LSW	Kula no na Po'e Hawaii o Papakolea, Kewalo, Kalawahine	kula.papakolea@gmail.com	96813
Sean Taketa McLaughlin		seantaketa@gmail.com	96817
Joseph Lapilio	Waianae Economic Development Council	j.lapilio@thewedc.com	96792
Alexandra Slous	Perspective Media	ali@createwithperspective.com	96734
Mahealani Keo	Nurture Cultivate Inc	mahealani.keo@ncihawaii.org	96717
Kuulei Arce	MOLOKAI RURAL HEALTH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION	22kuulei@gmail.com	96729
Linda Clark		clarkl004@gmail.com	96713
Jenny Miller	EducationSuperHighway	jenny.miller@educationsuperhighway.org	80303
Todd Robertson	Hyperspective Studios, Inc.	todd@hyperspective.com	96813
Brian Dote	Tapiki LLC	brian@tapiki.com	96797
Daniel C. Smith, PhD		dancsmith@rocketmail.com	96782
Ian Kitajima	PICHTR	ian.kitajima@pichtr.org	96814

HB-1408-HD-1

Submitted on: 2/14/2023 3:37:39 PM

Testimony for CPC on 2/16/2023 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Mark A. Koppel	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I asking to approve HBA!408

Who can be against Digital Equity? All our people need this access.

You can read other reason elsewhere.

Mahalo

Mark Koppel

P O Box 283

Hakalau HI 96710