

STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3144

Honolulu, Hawaii

MAR 20 2024

RE: H.B. No. 2359
H.D. 2
S.D. 1

Honorable Ronald D. Kouchi
President of the Senate
Thirty-Second State Legislature
Regular Session of 2024
State of Hawaii

Sir:

Your Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism,
to which was referred H.B. No. 2359, H.D. 2, entitled:

"A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND
DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE,"

begs leave to report as follows:

The purpose and intent of this measure is to establish the
Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to
deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the
State.

Your Committee received testimony in support of this measure
from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and
Tourism; Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs; State
Council on Developmental Disabilities; Office of Hawaiian Affairs;
Disability and Communication Access Board; one member of the Kaua'i
County Council; Hawaiian Telcom; Chamber of Commerce Hawaii;
Broadband Hui; Hawai'i Primary Care Association; Hawai'i Library
Association; AARP Hawai'i; Maui Chamber of Commerce; Kapolei
Chamber of Commerce; Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center;
and one individual.

Your Committee finds that digital access and digital skills
for remote work, school, and access to social services such as
unemployment claims, telehealth, and other essential services



within the State are critically important, particularly in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged communities. Your Committee further finds that digital equity programs in communities are essential for the social and economic well-being of the residents of the State. This measure enables the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office to work with rural and underserved communities to identify and address barriers to digital equity and to increase access and the ability to be full participants in the digital economy.

Your Committee has amended this measure by:

- (1) Removing wireless community networks from the list of eligible projects for the Digital Equity Grant Program;
- (2) Inserting an effective date of January 1, 2060, to encourage further discussion; and
- (3) Making technical, nonsubstantive amendments for the purposes of clarity and consistency.

As affirmed by the record of votes of the members of your Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism that is attached to this report, your Committee is in accord with the intent and purpose of H.B. No. 2359, H.D. 2, as amended herein, and recommends that it pass Second Reading in the form attached hereto as H.B. No. 2359, H.D. 2, S.D. 1, and be referred to your Committees on Ways and Means and Judiciary.

Respectfully submitted on
behalf of the members of the
Committee on Energy, Economic
Development, and Tourism,


LYNN DECOITE, Chair



