STAND. COM. REP. NO. 3144

Honolulu, Hawaii

## MAR 2 D 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,

N DECOITE, Chair

## The Senate Thirty-Second Legislature State of Hawai'i

## Record of Votes Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism EET

Bill / Resolution No.:* Committee Referral: Date:					
HB2359, HD2 EET, WAM/JOC 3-14-24					
The Committee is reconsidering its previous decision on this measure.					
If so, then the previous decision was to:					
The Recommendation is:					
Pass, unamended Pass, with amendments Hold Recommit 2312 2311 2310 2313					
Members		Aye	Aye (WR)	Nay	Excused
DECOITE, Lynn (C)					
WAKAI, Glenn (VC)		V			
FUKUNAGA, Carol			V		
KIM, Donna Mercado					
FEVELLA, Kurt				<del></del>	
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TOTAL		3		0	
Recommendation:  Adopted  Not Adopted					
Chair's or Designee's Signature					
Distribution: Original Pellow Pink Goldenrod File with Committee Report Clerk's Office Drafting Agency Committee File Copy					

\*Only one measure per Record of Votes