
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

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

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 27, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended
2 by adding a new part to be appropriately designated and to read
3 as follows:

4 **"PART . HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE**

5 **§27-A Definitions.** As used in this part:

6 "Broadband" means high-speed internet access that is always
7 on, including mobile and fixed technologies.

8 "Digital equity" means a condition in which all individuals
9 and communities have the information technology capacity needed
10 for full participation in society, democracy, and the economy.

11 **§27-B Hawaii broadband and digital equity office;**
12 **establishment; strategic broadband coordinator; staff.** (a)

13 There is established the Hawaii broadband and digital equity
14 office within the office of enterprise technology services.

15 (b) Without regard to section 26-34, the governor shall
16 appoint a strategic broadband coordinator, who shall be exempt



1 from chapter 76, to head the Hawaii broadband and digital equity
2 office.

3 **§27-C Hawaii broadband and digital equity office; duties.**

4 In furtherance of the State's objectives and policies for the
5 economy pursuant to section 226-10.5, the Hawaii broadband and
6 digital equity office shall:

7 (1) Develop and implement specific strategies and plans to
8 aggressively increase broadband affordability,
9 penetration, and competitive availability in the
10 State;

11 (2) Support the efforts of both public and private
12 entities in the State to enhance or facilitate the
13 deployment of and access to competitively priced,
14 advanced electronic communications services, including
15 broadband and its products and services and internet
16 access services of general application throughout the
17 State;

18 (3) Promote the landing of trans-Pacific submarine cable,
19 including the development of a shared access cable
20 station and associated terrestrial connectivity to
21 reduce barriers to fiber landing in Hawaii;



- 1 (4) Promote, advocate, and facilitate the implementation
2 of the findings and recommendations of the Hawaii
3 broadband task force established by Act 2, First
4 Special Session Laws of Hawaii 2007, and the 2020
5 Hawaii Broadband Strategic Plan;
- 6 (5) Support the findings of community-based groups as
7 reflected in its digital equity declaration;
- 8 (6) Administer grant programs in support of broadband
9 infrastructure, innovation, and the digital economy;
- 10 (7) Actively seek out funding from public and private
11 sources in furtherance of the office's duties pursuant
12 to this section; and
- 13 (8) Provide a repository, aggregation point, and
14 governance framework for broadband mapping and digital
15 equity data from various sources, including digital
16 literacy, telehealth, distance education, remote work,
17 internet accessibility, and service coverage to
18 support mapping, reporting, infrastructure deployment,
19 and data-driven policy.

20 **§27-D Broadband planning and coordination; cooperation.**

- 21 (a) The Hawaii broadband and digital equity office shall:



- 1 (1) Seek input and the widest possible cooperation from
2 public and private agencies and individuals to achieve
3 the purposes of this part;
- 4 (2) Work closely with and assist the counties in the
5 promotion of coordinated state and county broadband
6 planning;
- 7 (3) Encourage every state department, county agency, and
8 other public or private agencies and individuals
9 involved in broadband programs to participate in the
10 activities of the office and incorporate, to the
11 extent feasible, the ideas and suggestions of the
12 participants in the office's comprehensive planning
13 goals;
- 14 (4) Monitor the broadband-based development efforts of
15 other states and nations in areas such as business,
16 education, and health;
- 17 (5) Advise the office of enterprise technology services on
18 other states' best practices involving remote work
19 promotion and policies and strategies related to
20 making affordable broadband services available to
21 every home and business in the State;



1 (6) Monitor broadband-related activities at the federal
2 level;

3 (7) Encourage public-private partnerships to increase the
4 deployment and adoption of broadband services and
5 applications;

6 (8) Monitor regulatory and policy changes for potential
7 impact on broadband deployment and sustainability in
8 the State; and

9 (9) Advise the chief information officer on broadband
10 deployment.

11 (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to
12 delegate, or detract in any way from, the functions, powers, and
13 duties conferred by law or rule on any department or agency of
14 the State or county.

15 **§27-E Broadband and digital equity special fund. (a)**

16 There is established in the state treasury the broadband and
17 digital equity special fund to be administered by the Hawaii
18 broadband and digital equity office, into which shall be
19 deposited:

20 (1) Proceeds of leases of broadband infrastructure owned
21 by the State;



- 1 (2) Appropriations by the legislature to the special fund;
- 2 and
- 3 (3) Gifts, donations, and grants from public agencies and
- 4 private persons.

5 All interest earned or accrued on moneys deposited into the
6 special fund shall become a part of the special fund.

7 (b) Moneys in the broadband and digital equity special
8 fund shall be used for:

- 9 (1) Supporting broadband projects, excluding the
- 10 deployment of broadband infrastructure for the
- 11 provision of retail service;
- 12 (2) Defraying the cost of internet services; and
- 13 (3) Funding positions for personnel to provide technical
- 14 assistance to the community.

15 (c) Expenditures from the broadband and digital equity
16 special fund shall be made by the Hawaii broadband and digital
17 equity office, subject to oversight and prior approval by the
18 information technology steering committee."

19 SECTION 2. Chapter 206S, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
20 repealed.



1 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
2 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
3 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 to be
4 deposited into the broadband and digital equity special fund
5 under section 27-E, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

6 SECTION 4. There is appropriated out of the broadband and
7 digital equity special fund the sum of \$ or so much
8 thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2025-2026 for the
9 purposes of the fund.

10 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the Hawaii
11 broadband and digital equity office for the purposes of this
12 Act.

13 SECTION 5. All rights, powers, functions, and duties of
14 the department of business, economic development, and tourism
15 relating to the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office are
16 transferred to the department of accounting and general
17 services.

18 All employees who occupy civil service positions and whose
19 functions are transferred to the department of accounting and
20 general services by this Act shall retain their civil service
21 status, whether permanent or temporary. Employees shall be



1 transferred without loss of salary, seniority (except as
2 prescribed by applicable collective bargaining agreements),
3 retention points, prior service credit, any vacation and sick
4 leave credits previously earned, and other rights, benefits, and
5 privileges, in accordance with state personnel laws and this
6 Act; provided that the employees possess the minimum
7 qualifications and public employment requirements for the class
8 or position to which transferred or appointed, as applicable;
9 provided further that subsequent changes in status may be made
10 pursuant to applicable civil service and compensation laws.

11 Any employee who, prior to this Act, is exempt from civil
12 service and is transferred as a consequence of this Act may
13 retain the employee's exempt status, but shall not be appointed
14 to a civil service position as a consequence of this Act. An
15 exempt employee who is transferred by this Act shall not suffer
16 any loss of prior service credit, vacation or sick leave credits
17 previously earned, or other employee benefits or privileges as a
18 consequence of this Act; provided that the employees possess
19 legal and public employment requirements for the position to
20 which transferred or appointed, as applicable; provided further
21 that subsequent changes in status may be made pursuant to



1 applicable employment and compensation laws. The comptroller
2 may prescribe the duties and qualifications of these employees
3 and fix their salaries without regard to chapter 76, Hawaii
4 Revised Statutes.

5 SECTION 6. All appropriations, records, equipment,
6 machines, files, supplies, contracts, books, papers, documents,
7 maps, and other personal property heretofore made, used,
8 acquired, or held by the department of business, economic
9 development, and tourism relating to the functions of the Hawaii
10 broadband and digital equity office transferred to the
11 department of accounting and general services shall be
12 transferred with the functions to which they relate.

13 SECTION 7. In codifying the new sections added by section
14 1 of this Act, the revisor of statutes shall substitute
15 appropriate section numbers for the letters used in designating
16 the new sections in this Act.

17 SECTION 8. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 3000.



Report Title:

Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office; Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism; Office of Enterprise Technology Services; Broadband and Digital Equity Special Fund; Appropriation

Description:

Transfers the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office from the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism to the Office of Enterprise Technology Services in the Department of Accounting and General Services. Establishes the Broadband and Digital Equity Special Fund. Appropriates funds. Effective 7/1/3000. (HD1)

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