

**OFFICE OF ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION
KE KE'ENA HO'OMOHALA WAIWAI
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU**

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January 29, 2026

The Honorable, Brandon Elefante, Chair,
The Honorable Rachele Lamosao, Vice-Chair,
and Members of the Committee on Labor and Technology
State of Hawai'i Senate
415 South Beretania Street, Room 225
Honolulu, HI, 96813

**SUBJECT: Honolulu Office of Economic Revitalization Support for Senate Bill 1036
relating to Consumer Protection**

Aloha Chair Elefante, Vice-Chair Lamosao and Members of the Committee:

The City and County of Honolulu, Office of Economic Revitalization (OER), submits testimony in strong support of this measure codifying net neutrality protections.

Our office works to strengthen Honolulu's economy by expanding broadband access and advancing digital equity for small businesses, workers, entrepreneurs, and underserved communities. A free and open internet is foundational to economic activity, workforce development, education and access to essential services.

By preserving net neutrality principles, this bill supports innovation, economic resilience and inclusive growth across the City and County of Honolulu. For these reasons, OER supports passage of this measure.

Sincerely,

Amy Asselbaye
Executive Director



Charter Communications
Testimony of Rebecca Lieberman, Director of Government Affairs

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & TECHNOLOGY

Hawaii State Capitol
Friday, January 30, 2026

OPPOSITION TO S.B. 1036 – RELATING TO CONSUMER PROTECTOIN

Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on S.B. 1036, a bill that establishes net neutrality requirements for broadband providers. Charter respectfully submits this testimony in **opposition**.

As the largest broadband provider in the state, Charter supports an open internet and shares Hawaii's commitment to ensuring consumers have reliable, high-quality broadband service. We do not block, throttle, or otherwise interfere with the lawful online activity of our customers and since the Federal Communication Commission's first open internet order, we have consistently committed and adhered to those principles. Today, pursuant to federal law, our network management practices and network performance are publicly available to our customers.

Charter believes S.B. 1036 is unnecessary in light of two key considerations: first, Hawaii already has existing and effective net neutrality protections in place; and second, there is no evidence of Hawaii-specific consumer harm that would warrant additional state-level regulation in this area.

In particular, the Executive Order issued by Governor Ige in 2018 remains in effect today. That executive order requires broadband providers doing business in the state to adhere to net neutrality principles, including prohibitions on blocking, throttling, and paid prioritization. To date, Charter is not

aware of any complaints or violations arising under that order. Importantly, the 2018 order more closely aligns with the principles in the Federal Communications Commission's net neutrality rules adopted during both the Obama and Biden administrations. By contrast, S.B. 1036 diverges significantly from the approaches taken by both of the most recent Democratic administrations, raising concerns about unnecessary duplication and regulatory inconsistency.

At the same time, there is no demonstrated evidence of consumer harm in Hawaii attributable to the absence of a state-level net neutrality law. Notably, broadband speeds have increased, the price per megabit for consumers has decreased, and service quality has steadily improved due to the investments made by broadband providers like Charter.

This experience is consistent with broader national trends. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, when broadband traffic increased by 30 to 60 percent, our broadband network absorbed the unprecedented demand without widespread degradation of service or reductions in speeds. These outcomes underscore the importance of investment-driven network management and flexibility.

For these reasons, Charter respectfully urges the Committee to defer S.B. 1036. Preserving a stable and consistent regulatory environment will allow broadband providers and the State to remain focused on investing in and improving connectivity for Hawaii's consumers.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Written Statement of

**Jeannine Souki,
Senior Manager – Government & Regulatory Affairs**

SENATE COMMITTEE ON LABOR & TECHNOLOGY

January 30, 2026, 10 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 225 & Videoconference

COMMENTS FOR:

SB 1036 – RELATING TO CONSUMER PROTECTION

To: Chair Elefante, Vice Chair Lamosao, and Members of the Committee
Re: **Testimony providing comments for SB1036**

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to offer comments on **SB1036**, which would establish net neutrality rules for broadband internet service in Hawai‘i by banning practices such as blocking, slowing down service, paid fast lanes, and certain zero-rating practices.

Hawaiian Telcom and our parent company, altfiber, believe high-speed Internet is a powerful asset that facilitates access to education, employment opportunities, and health services. High-speed Internet allows entrepreneurs to start and expand businesses. Additionally high-speed Internet supports a multitude of entertainment choices. As a company, we do not practice throttling or charge a premium to access content that is freely accessible over the Internet.

However, as the Committee considers this measure, it may be helpful to note the current status of Hawai‘i’s participation in the federal **Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)** program. Hawai‘i was allocated approximately **\$149.5 million in BEAD funding** in June 2023, and its Initial Proposal was fully approved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) in July 2024. The State’s BEAD Final Proposal was submitted to NTIA in **September 2025** following public comment, placing Hawai‘i among the states awaiting final approval and authorization to proceed with subgrantee awards and construction activities.

In October 2025, **NTIA issued guidance** stating that **BEAD participants must be exempt from state net neutrality and broadband affordability laws** during the BEAD period of performance in order for a state to remain eligible for funding. This guidance applies while BEAD-funded networks are being built and brought into service and may affect how state consumer protection statutes interact with federally funded broadband deployments.

As our state is awaiting final approval in the BEAD process and the significant federal investment at stake, the interaction between SB1036 and evolving federal requirements may warrant careful consideration to minimize uncertainty and avoid unintended impacts on BEAD implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments. Mahalo for your consideration.

LATE

SB-1036

Submitted on: 1/29/2026 4:13:51 PM
Testimony for LBT on 1/30/2026 3:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sean Taketa McLaughlin	Individual	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

January 29, 2026

Island Communities Rely Upon Open Networks

Public Health, Safety and Community Resilience

Diverse geography and long distances give island communities unique challenges to meet basic needs for social services including health care, police, fire and emergency responders. Where resources are thin there is a special need for community-wide response to recover from natural disasters. Open networks allow people to connect directly with agencies that provide local services, information and products. Closed networks restrict and monetize those connections.

Education and Training - Lifelong Learning

Access to education opportunities is increasingly linked to fast internet access. Open, unrestricted broadband connections empower local experts to share their knowledge across the community and beyond. Local knowledge and unique digital archives of historic and cultural significance can be hosted and shared with robust and open connections. Closed networks allow ISPs to restrict and further monetize access. Local information resources become less available and more costly to deliver, favoring distant owners and only profitable, well funded ideas.

Economic Opportunity - Marketplace of Ideas and Transactions

Island economies include essential natural resources and management of those resources increasingly relies upon fast connections to support diverse economic activity and public uses.

Just like big box retail outlets impact locally owned businesses, a closed internet (without Net Neutrality) will bias traffic away from local services and products and concentrate the market power in corporate centers tied to the network owner. Open Internet supports open markets.

Culture and Arts - Past, Present, Future

Network neutrality and open access are particularly vital for the creative economies of Island communities where innovation and diverse cultures thrive. Many artist inventors are local. Closed networks reduce diversity by creating barriers to enter the marketplace of ideas.

Remote areas generally have less access to all forms of media, not just broadband. Therefore, open and unfiltered access to all information online is vitally important for Island communities.

Civic Engagement - Liberty and Justice

Lacking net neutrality protections, private network providers become the gatekeepers between consumers, businesses, nonprofits and public agencies and the people they serve. Closed networks direct people to advertising or whatever content most benefits the network owner. Open networks support freedom of information and expression, essential human rights.

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