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TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND TAXATION

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2008

March 11, 2008
1:15 p.m.

WRITTEN TESTIMONY ON H.B. 2473, H.D.2 – RELATING TO TECHNOLOGY

TO THE HONORABLE CAROL FUKUNAGA, CHAIR, AND MEMBERS OF THE
COMMITTEE:

My name is Clyde S. Sonobe, and I am the Administrator of the Cable Television Division, Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (“Department”) as well as a member of the Hawaii broadband task force. The Department supports the intent of this measure so long as it does not replace or adversely impact priorities as indicated in the Executive Supplemental Budget Request.

The broadband task force determined that it could best achieve its mission by establishing different working groups composed of task force members and others from the community with specific expertise. In December 2007, the task force submitted its report to the Legislature outlining its work in 2007 and setting forth a summary work plan for 2008.

Over the course of 2008, the task force will be working to develop a set of recommendations that will be submitted to the Legislature prior to the 2009 Legislative Session. The Department will continue to participate in the work of the task force given that advanced communications services are vital to all of Hawaii’s residents and businesses throughout the State.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on this measure.

Written Statement of
YUKA NAGASHIMA
Executive Director & CEO
High Technology Development Corporation
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TAXATION
Tuesday, March 11, 2008
1:15 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of
HB 2473 HD2 RELATING TO TECHNOLOGY.

Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Espero, and Members of the Senate Committee on Economic Development and Taxation.

The High Technology Development Corporation supports the concept behind HB 2473 HD2. There have been many good ideas introduced this legislative session that support the State's economic development goals. We note, however, that this appropriation was not included in the Executive's Supplemental Budget, and request that this appropriation not displace the priorities contained in that budget.

Since its inception in 2007 (HB 310 HD2 SD2 CD2), the Hawaii Broadband Task Force has brought together various stakeholders and experts from segments of our community to raise awareness of the importance of broadband technologies in areas such as quality of education, delivery of healthcare, and strengthening our economy. Establishing infrastructure for innovation is a role of government, and this Task Force can identify appropriate plans to that end.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 2473 HD2.

Testimony Presented to the
Senate Committee on Economic Development and Taxation
March 11, 2008 at 1:15 pm

by
David Lassner
Vice President for Information Technology and Chief Information Officer
University of Hawaii

HB 2473, HD2 Relating to High Technology

Chair Fukunaga, Vice Chair Espero and Members of the Committee:

As a member of the Hawaii Broadband Task Force, I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 2473, HD2. This bill would provide funding for the Task Force to complete its work and provide a final report with recommendations to the 2009 Legislature as required under the law that established the Task Force.

Through Act 2 of the First Special Session of Hawaii last year, the Legislature created the Hawaii Broadband Task Force with the primary purposes of: 1) removing barriers to broadband access, including gaining wider access to public rights-of-way; 2) identifying opportunities for increased broadband development and adoption, including very high speed broadband services; and 3) enabling the creation and development of new advanced communication technologies in Hawaii. I was honored to be appointed to the task force by the Senate President and House Speaker, and even more honored to be elected by the members as Chair.

Although the task force has only been convened since October, we have already provided an initial interim report to the Legislature as required by Act 2. In that report we have outlined our vision for broadband in Hawaii, as follows:

Hawaii understands that advanced broadband services are an essential infrastructure for an innovation economy and a knowledge society in the twenty-first century. As a result of proactive policy initiatives, Hawaii residents and businesses throughout the State have access to advanced broadband services of the caliber and at the pricing available in the leading developed nations of the world.

Our initial report is available on our web site at www.hbtf.org. It reflects the work of the task force in the very short time it had been in existence in 2007.

It is already clear to the task force that broadband offers immense opportunities for social, economic, and educational advancement. It is also clear that Hawaii has tremendous capability and potential, as demonstrated by the wide range of activities underway and described in our initial report, including some that may soon outgrow Hawaii's current broadband capabilities.

Our initial findings suggest that Hawaii has some significant gaps in availability, which will be identified in greater detail in our final report if we are able to complete our work as planned. Although a number of States are ahead of us in beginning to develop their broadband strategies, Hawaii does not particularly lag them and the Task Force plans to learn from their work as well as our own deliberations.

Of greater concern is the fact that the U.S. as a whole is already lagging and falling further behind other advanced nations. Unlike the U.S., much of the world has explicitly identified broadband as a high priority infrastructure and developed national policies that promote deployment and use of advanced capabilities and services to enable their communities to thrive in the 21st century. In addition, the task force has noted that Hawaii faces disadvantages relative to other states as a result of our island geography.

Over the next year the task force would like to be able to collect quantitative data on the availability of broadband services in Hawaii and the actual uptake and use. We believe this will be an important component in developing sound recommendations in our Final Report to the 2009 Legislature, in accordance with Act 2.

Thank you for your support of the Hawaii Broadband Task Force, and for this opportunity provide testimony in favor of supporting our final year of work for you