

Written Statement of
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before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS
Monday, February 25, 2008
10:30 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of
SB 2393 SD1 RELATING TO TECHNOLOGY.

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui, and Members of the Senate Committee on Ways & Means.

The High Technology Development Corporation supports the concept behind SB 2393 SD1. 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, 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.

The task force requires the legislature's support during fiscal period 2008-2009 to complete their work of this past year and before the task force ceases to exist after June 30, 2009.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 2393 SD1.

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
February 25, 2008 at 10:30 am
by
David Lassner

SB 2393, SD1 Relating to Technology

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Tsutsui and Members of the Committee:

As a member of the Hawaii Broadband Task Force, I am submitting this testimony in support of HB2415, HD1. 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.