



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

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Statement of
LUIS P. SALAVERIA
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before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & BUSINESS

Wednesday, February 15, 2017
9:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 309

in consideration of
HB597, PROPOSED HD1
RELATING TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Chair Nakashima, Vice Chair Keohokalole and Members of the Committee.

The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) offers comments with concerns on HB 597, Proposed HD1, which establishes a broadband coordinator position within DBEDT to create the state broadband plan and report to the Legislature prior to the start of the 2018 Session.

DBEDT supports the Legislature's finding that capitalizing on broadband technology will improve Hawaii's outcomes in economic development. Using funds appropriated in Act 243 (15) DBEDT received Governor's approval to create a Broadband Strategy Officer position to procure a financial advisor to assist the State in structuring and procuring a public private partnership to plan, design, construct and operate a four-bore transpacific fiber-optic cable landing site (CLS). Proposals are due on February 21, 2017, and a project partner and site will be selected after careful due diligence. This project will be in fulfillment of a Broadband Task Force recommendation.

DBEDT is concerned that the scope of work in the Proposed HD1, appears to overlap on-going work in other departments, and is much more extensive than one position could accomplish prior to the 2018 Session, especially since most of that time would be required to establish, recruit and hire.

We understand the desire of the Legislature to centralize accountability for broadband planning in one department. However, DBEDT has concerns that a single broadband coordinator would not be adequate to create a Broadband plan which would include: 1) a statewide broadband infrastructure gap analysis; 2) a digital literacy curriculum; 3) public input activities; 4) solutions for obtaining rights-of-way; 5) a list of CIP projects; and 6) legislation to establish a broadband regulatory authority.

If the legislature were to move this measure forward we would respectfully request that the objectives be limited to: 1) a statewide broadband infrastructure gap analysis; 2) Identifying opportunities to encourage private sector deployment of ubiquitous high speed broadband; and 3) an analysis of how government stakeholders can better coordinate efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments on the proposed HD1.