
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO A BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

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

1 SECTION 1. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by
2 adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read
3 as follows:

4 "CHAPTER

5 HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

6 § -1 Definitions. As used in this chapter:

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

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

12 "Office" means the Hawaii broadband and digital equity
13 office.

14 § -2 Hawaii broadband and digital equity office;
15 establishment; state broadband strategy coordinator; staff. (a)

16 There is established within the office of the governor the
17 Hawaii broadband and digital equity office.



(b) The governor shall appoint, exempt from chapter 76, a state broadband strategy coordinator to head the office. The governor's office shall employ any staff as may be necessary for the purposes of this chapter; provided that any staff employed pursuant to this section shall be exempt from chapter 76.

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

In furtherance of the State's objectives and policies for the economy pursuant to section 226-10.5, the office shall:

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

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

(3) Promote the landing of trans-Pacific submarine cable, including the development of a shared access cable



1 station and associated terrestrial connectivity to
2 reduce barriers to fiber landing in Hawaii;

3 (4) Promote, advocate, and facilitate the implementation
4 of the findings and recommendations of the Hawaii
5 broadband task force established by Act 2, First
6 Special Session Laws of Hawaii 2007;

7 (5) Support the findings of the community-based Broadband
8 Hui as reflected in its digital equity declaration;

9 (6) Administer grant programs in support of broadband
10 infrastructure, innovation, and the digital economy;

11 (7) Actively seek out funding from private and public
12 sources in furtherance of the office's duties pursuant
13 to this section; and

14 (8) Provide a repository, aggregation point and governance
15 framework for broadband mapping and digital equity
16 data from various sources, including but not limited
17 to digital literacy, telehealth, distance education,
18 remote work, internet accessibility, and service
19 coverage to support mapping, reporting, infrastructure
20 deployment, and data-driven policy.



§ -4 Broadband planning and coordination; cooperation.

(a) The office shall:

- (1) Seek input and the widest possible cooperation from public and private agencies and individuals to achieve the purposes of this chapter;
- (2) Work closely with and assist the counties in the promotion of coordinated state and county broadband planning;
- (3) Encourage every state department, county agency, and other public or private agencies and individuals involved in broadband programs to participate in the activities of the office and incorporate, to the extent feasible, the ideas and suggestions of the participants in the office's comprehensive planning goals;
- (4) Monitor the broadband-based development efforts of other states and nations in areas such as business, education, and health;
- (5) Advise the department on other states' best practices involving remote work promotion and policies and strategies related to making affordable broadband



1 services available to every home and business in the
2 State;

3 (6) Monitor broadband-related activities at the federal
4 level;

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

8 (8) Monitor regulatory and policy changes for potential
9 impact on broadband deployment and sustainability in
10 the State, and

11 (9) Advise the director of business, economic development,
12 and tourism on broadband deployment.

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

17 SECTION 2. There is appropriated out of the general
18 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
19 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2021-2022 and
20 the same sum or so much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal
21 year 2022-2023 for the creation and staffing of the Hawaii




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1 broadband and digital equity office, including the establishment
2 of three full-time equivalent (3.00 FTE) positions that are
3 exempt from chapter 76, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

4 The sums appropriated shall be expended by the office of
5 the governor for the purposes of this Act.

6 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2021.

7
INTRODUCED BY: 

JAN 27 2021



H.B. NO. 1251

Report Title:

The Office of the Governor; Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office within the Governor's office. Appropriates funds for the establishment and staffing for the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office.

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