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## HOUSE RESOLUTION

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URGING THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION TO DEVELOP AND ADOPT AN EFFICIENT, STREAMLINED PROCESS FOR REVIEWING ELECTRIC UTILITIES' REQUESTS TO PROVIDE MIDDLE MILE BROADBAND SERVICES IN FURTHERANCE OF THE STATE'S EFFORTS TO EXPEDITE BROADBAND ACCESS AND EQUITY.

1 WHEREAS, the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic made clear  
2 the importance of broadband equity to ensure fair access to  
3 telework, telemedicine, and remote learning opportunities for  
4 the people of Hawaii; and  
5

6 WHEREAS, electric utilities across the nation are  
7 increasingly reliant on their telecommunications infrastructure  
8 to support modern grid operations and manage increasing volumes  
9 of distributed energy resources, which requires electric  
10 utilities to modernize their grids to include robust and diverse  
11 telecommunications infrastructure; and  
12

13 WHEREAS, the State's regulated electric utilities are well  
14 positioned to help bridge the digital divide by leveraging their  
15 telecommunications infrastructure to provide middle mile  
16 broadband services, which will allow internet service providers  
17 to offer services to communities that are otherwise cost  
18 prohibitive to reach; and  
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20 WHEREAS, the middle mile method is a common sense approach  
21 to addressing the digital divide as it represents a more cost-  
22 effective way for internet service providers to offer broadband  
23 in low- to moderate-income, hard-to-reach communities, while  
24 also lowering costs to electricity customers through revenue  
25 generated from leasing middle mile services to those internet  
26 service providers; and  
27

28 WHEREAS, the expansion of broadband services is in line  
29 with the State's current efforts to expedite the deployment of  
30 broadband and is also in line with national trends; and



1  
2 WHEREAS, on November 9, 2021, the National Association of  
3 Regulatory Utility Commissioners issued a resolution that  
4 underscores the importance of electric utilities' role in  
5 broadband expansion through the utilization of their internal  
6 telecommunication infrastructure; and  
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8 WHEREAS, public utilities in the State are able to provide  
9 foundational and diverse middle mile broadband services to  
10 internet service providers and other third parties without  
11 duplicating efforts, congesting the right-of-way or view plane,  
12 or increasing costs to the consumer; and  
13

14 WHEREAS, this allows an electric utility and internet  
15 service provider to partner together and reduce operating costs  
16 for the electric utility and internet service provider,  
17 resulting in savings that can then be passed on to the electric  
18 ratepayer and broadband user, who are often the same end-user;  
19 and  
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21 WHEREAS, existing law provides multiple layers of  
22 protection to ensure that an electric utility does not favor  
23 itself or its affiliates or cross-subsidize any of its  
24 activities with ratepayers' funds, while also providing maximum  
25 value to the ratepayer; and  
26

27 WHEREAS, in conjunction with the Federal Communications  
28 Commission's authority and Federal Pole Attachment Act, the  
29 Public Utilities Commission exercises authority over electric  
30 utilities that own distribution poles, requiring that the  
31 electric utilities provide non-discriminatory access to their  
32 poles and comply with strict federal timelines and regulations  
33 governing pole attachments; and  
34

35 WHEREAS, this body supports electric utilities' right and  
36 authority to provide middle mile broadband service to internet  
37 service providers and other third parties to facilitate digital  
38 equity and promote expeditious broadband deployment to all areas  
39 of the State; and  
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41 WHEREAS, an expedited review process to provide middle mile  
42 broadband services would help address the growing need for



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1 access to broadband and enable equitable access to telework,  
2 telemedicine, remote learning, and participation in the digital  
3 economy; now, therefore,  
4

5 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
6 Thirty-first Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session  
7 of 2022, that the Public Utilities Commission is urged to  
8 develop and adopt an efficient, streamlined process for  
9 reviewing electric utilities' requests to provide middle mile  
10 broadband services, as authorized under section 269-19, Hawaii  
11 Revised Statutes, in furtherance of the State's efforts to  
12 expedite broadband access and equity; and  
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14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
15 Resolution be transmitted to the Director of Commerce and  
16 Consumer Affairs; Director of Business, Economic Development,  
17 and Tourism; Chairperson of the Public Utilities Commission;  
18 Executive Director of the Division of Consumer Advocacy;  
19 President and Chief Executive Officer of Hawaiian Electric  
20 Company; and Chief Executive Officer of Kauai Island Utility  
21 Cooperative.  
22  
23  
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OFFERED BY:

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