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The State Legislature
The Senate Committee on Ways and Means
Thursday, March 3, 2022
10:10 a.m.

TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair

RE: Support for S.B. 2479, Relating to Broadband Infrastructure

Aloha Chairs San Buenaventura and Chang, and Members of the Committees:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a membership organization of people age fifty and over, with over 140,000 members in Hawai'i. **AARP supports S.B. 2479** which requires each public housing project, dwelling unit, and state low-income housing project that is built, renovated or reconstructed after 1/1/2023, to include all necessary broadband infrastructure necessary for tenants to have access to broadband services

The recent pandemic has significantly increased the demand and use of broadband for communication across all sectors, and throughout our communities statewide. Students are engaged in distance learning for their schoolwork, businesses for e-commerce transactions and patients have become more reliant on telehealth to connect with their physicians for medical consultation and monitoring. This is especially important for homebound kūpuna at risk of exposure during this health pandemic. The heavy demand for broadband access has amplified the weakness in our broadband infrastructure especially in rural communities, and other underserved or unserved areas in the State. AARP supports efforts that will expand digital equity and access, close the gap in the disparity to ensure that all individuals and communities have access to information and modern communication technologies. Having the broadband infrastructure included in future public housing dwellings will assist many who could not afford the connectivity on their own.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to **support S.B. 2479**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keali'i Lopez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Keali'i Lopez, State Director

Statement Before The
SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
Thursday, March 3, 2022
10:10 AM
Conference Room 211 and Videoconference

in consideration of
SB 2479
RELATING TO BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE.

Chair DELA CRUZ, Vice Chair KEITH-AGARAN, and Members of the Senate Ways and Means Committees

Common Cause Hawaii supports SB 2479, which requires each public housing project, dwelling unit, and state low-income housing project that is built, renovated, or reconstructed after 1/1/2023, to include all necessary broadband infrastructure necessary for tenants to have access to broadband services.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to reforming government and strengthening democracy - one that works for everyone and not just the monied few.

As technology advances, many of our basic democracy values depend on robust connectivity. Broadband enhances civic engagement, participation in the democratic process, and a responsive government. Yet too many in Hawaii lack access to affordable, high-speed broadband and continue to face significant barriers to get online.

Affordability remains the most significant barrier to broadband adoption while those on the wrong side of the digital divide are disproportionately low-income, people of color, seniors, people with disabilities, and other marginalized communities. Without broadband, these communities live in a democracy where their voices go unheard, and their needs are unmet.

Therefore, it is clear that access to affordable broadband is a necessity in today's society for a functioning and vibrant democracy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 2479. If you have any questions of me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



ELIZABETH A. CHAR, M.D.
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH

STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
PRINCESS VICTORIA KAMĀMALU BUILDING
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
March 3, 2022

The Honorable Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
The Thirty-First Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator Dela Cruz and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: SB2479 Relating to Broadband Infrastructure

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS SB2479**, which requires each public housing project, dwelling unit, and state low-income housing project that is built, renovated, or reconstructed after 1/1/2023, to include all necessary broadband infrastructure necessary for tenants to have access to broadband service.

COVID has shown that our communities, especially our most vulnerable, must turn more and more to internet-based support. Some of these supports come in the form of telehealth appointments and Zoom-based communication. COVID proved that many individuals within our intellectual and developmental disability community are part of a high-risk group that needs to rely on staying at home and using internet services more than the average citizen. If these individuals found themselves without internet, they would lose critical access to services during the pandemic.

As we continue to make strides in technology, more and more technology is invented that helps individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) live more independently. However, we find that having broadband access is key for most new technologies that rely on wi-fi to function. Any efforts to increase broadband access like in new renovations or reconstructions of public housing will aid in our communities' access to broadband services.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of SB2479**.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Daintry Bartoldus".

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR

MIKE MCCARTNEY
DIRECTOR

CHUNG I. CHANG
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of
MIKE MCCARTNEY
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

Thursday, March 3, 2022

10:10 AM

State Capitol, Conference Room 211

In consideration of

SB2479

RELATING TO BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE.

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **SUPPORTS** SB2479 that requires each public housing project, dwelling unit, and state low-income housing project that is built, renovated, or reconstructed after 1/1/2023, to include all necessary broadband infrastructure necessary for tenants to have access to broadband service.

Over the course of the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the need for broadband access for all of Hawai'i's residents. This is especially true in the case of residents in Hawai'i's public housing units where there are limited broadband options. SB2479 provides the options for multiple broadband providers to offer low-cost options.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



LATE

Committee on Ways and Means
Chair Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Gilbert Keith-Agaran

Thursday, March 3, 2022, 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room 211 & Videoconference
SB 2479 RELATING TO BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

TESTIMONY

Janet Mason, Legislative Committee, League of Women Voters of Hawaii

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, and Committee Members:

The League of Women Voters of Hawaii supports SB2479 that requires each public housing project, dwelling unit, and state low-income housing project that is built, renovated, or reconstructed after 1/1/2023, to include all necessary broadband infrastructure necessary for tenants to have access to broadband service.

Broadband is a necessity for assuring equal access to local and state government, for maintaining openness and transparency in government activities, for communicating with legislative leaders, for engaging in political discourse, and for assuring that voters receive the information they need to participate in our democracy.

What of the last feet of broadband "infrastructure" required for access by our lower income citizens? Users need a smart phone, tablet, or computer to access the public infrastructure. We can only hope that the market responds to lower the cost of such privately-owned but critical hardware. Hopefully residents of our public housing will be able to solve this dilemma so they can access the broadband networks required under this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

SB-2479

Submitted on: 3/1/2022 6:21:08 PM

Testimony for WAM on 3/3/2022 10:10:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Remote Testimony Requested
Michael Press	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

My name is Michael Press. I am a teacher at Ilima Intermediate in Ewa Beach on Oahu. I support this bill and I urge you to do the same. Thank you.