



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
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March 30, 2022

TESTIMONY TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 / Senate Resolution 6 –
Urging the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office to Prioritize
Access to Broadband Services in Rural Areas Throughout the State

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 and Senate Resolution 6.

Broadband access provides persons with disabilities access to programs and services. Please ensure that this bill will protect the public, including people with disabilities, from unreasonable or increased costs.

Broadband access for all should be affordable, especially for underserved communities to foster their economic development, increase of job opportunities, enhance health care, and broaden educational opportunities.

Digital equity will not only ensure that people with disabilities have access to broadband, but it will promote a better quality of life for them as well.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kirby L. Shaw".

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

DAVID Y. IGE
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MIKE MCCARTNEY
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Statement of
MIKE MCCARTNEY
Director

Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

3:20 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 224

In consideration of

SCR12 / SR6

**URGING THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE TO
PRIORITIZE ACCESS TO BROADBAND SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS
THROUGHOUT THE STATE.**

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Misalucha and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports SCR12/SC6** that urges the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office to prioritize access to broadband services in rural areas throughout the state.

Over the course of the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the need for broadband infrastructure and digital equity for all of Hawai'i's residents and the federal government has seen fit to build robust broadband infrastructure and to fund broadband equity and digital equity programs across the country, especially in rural areas.

In order to achieve the goals, set forth by Federal programs like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, it is important that we continue to address broadband access, affordability, adoption and literacy for Hawai'i to achieve digital equity and thrive in the digital economy. The Broadband & Digital Equity Office will continue to provide the focus, coordination and facilitation of programs that enable all Hawai'i residents to seamlessly connect to the Internet and the digital tools needed to be successful in our modern society.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Statement Before The
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

3:20 PM

Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

in consideration of

SCR 12 / SR 6**URGING THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE TO PRIORITIZE ACCESS TO BROADBAND SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.**Chair WAKAI, Vice Chair MISALUCHA, and Members of the
Senate Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism Committee

Common Cause Hawaii supports SCR 12 / SR 6, urging the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office to prioritize access to broadband services in rural areas throughout the state.

Common Cause Hawaii is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to reforming government and strengthening democracy - one that works for everyone equally.

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, especially in rural areas, lack access to affordable, high-speed broadband and continue to face significant barriers to get online.

Those on the wrong side of the digital divide are disproportionately low-income, people of color, seniors, people with disabilities, marginalized communities, and people living in rural areas. Without broadband, these communities live in a democracy where their voices go unheard, and their needs are unmet.

Therefore, Common Cause Hawaii supports SCR 12 / SR 6, which urges (at page 2, lines 10-15) the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office “to prioritize access to broadband services in rural areas throughout the State.” Broadband equity is necessary for the good of our representative democracy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SCR 12 / SR 6. If you have any questions of me, please contact me at sma@commoncause.org.

Very respectfully yours,

Sandy Ma
Executive Director, Common Cause Hawaii



Charter Communications
Testimony of Rebecca Lieberman, Director of Government Affairs

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Hawaii State Capitol
Wednesday, March 30, 2022

**SUPPORT FOR S.C.R 12/S.R. 6, URGING THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE TO
PRIORITIZE ACCESS TO BROADBAND SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.**

Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Misalucha, and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support** of S.C.R. 12/S.R. 6, a resolution that urges the Broadband and Digital Equity Office to prioritize broadband planning in rural areas.

As the largest broadband provider in the state, Charter supports efforts to promote digital equity and broadband access. A key aspect of reducing the digital divide is by bringing broadband to unserved areas of Hawaii. The influx of federal dollars for broadband infrastructure expansion provides Hawaii with a unique opportunity to connect every location in the state. The vast majority of residents of Hawaii without access to high-speed internet live in rural areas across the state, particularly on Hawaii Island.

Charter believes that every Hawaii resident should have reliable access to the Internet. We will continue to help bring the benefits of broadband and access to the internet to those who need it most. In 2021 alone, Charter extended its network to reach an additional 20,000 homes and small businesses in Hawaii, investing more than \$106 million in the state. Additionally, Charter is pleased to now provide high-speed data services to beneficiaries living in the Hawaiian Homelands following a recent

announcement by DHHL, which allows homesteaders to obtain telecommunications services from a provider of their choice.

Charter is a member of DBEDT's weekly Broadband Hui to assist in strategic broadband planning and closing the Digital Divide. Additionally, Charter participated in the FCC's Emergency Broadband Benefit Program (EBB) and is now participating in the \$14.2 billion federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). The EBB, and now the ACP, has helped connect over 22,000 eligible households in Hawaii with high-speed broadband during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Broadband internet access is more important than ever and the newly adopted ACP offers a tremendous opportunity to help low-income families stay connected, providing eligible households a discount of up to \$30 per month toward broadband service and up to \$75 per month for households on the Hawaiian Homelands.

Mahalo for the opportunity to support S.C.R. 12/S.R. 6.



Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

Date: Mar. 30, 2022

Time: 3:20 p.m.

Where: Conference Room 224 & Videoconference

RE: **SUPPORTING SCR 12 / SR 6** URGING THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE TO PRIORITIZE ACCESS TO BROADBAND SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

Aloha mai e Chair Wakai, Vice Chair Misalucha, and Members of the Committee,

As members of the Broadband Hui, the listed organizations and individuals **SUPPORT SCR 12 / SR 6**, urging the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office to prioritize access to broadband services in rural areas throughout the state.

For more than 20 months, our organizations have collaborated, each within their own ability, to increase Hawai'i's digital capacity, thereby supporting the continuity of social connections, education, employment, and access to other essential services throughout the pandemic. Through the work of the Broadband Hui, we have supported broadband infrastructure development in rural communities, provided digital devices for students and families, supported the accessibility of telehealth, provided information on low-cost internet options, and adopted a Digital Equity Declaration to set a vision and goals for a more equitable digital future.

As we stated at the outset of the pandemic, addressing digital inequity through broadband access, digital literacy, and digitally-enabled societal systems is one of our greatest opportunities for economic and social recovery, diversification, and resilience. The truth of this statement has been proven throughout the past two years, and is even more urgent as we look toward future recovery -- now with a once-in-a-generation opportunity with robust funding inbound with the American Recovery Act.

Supporting implementation of broadband services for rural areas statewide is a natural - and critically-important - focus for the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office. Our community members residing in rural parts of the state deserve equitable access to not only the technology but the multitude of

opportunities that the technology enables for education, for workforce development, for creativity and for communication.

For these reasons, we kindly request you **PASS SCR 12 / SR 6**. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

(Please see names on the following page.)

	Name	Organization	Email	Zip
1	Brad Kaleo Bennett	`Auamo Collaborative	kokua@auamocollaborative.org	96720
2	Daniel C. Smith, Ph.D.		smithdan@hawaii.edu	96782
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	Lynelle Marble	Hawaii Executive Collaborative	lynelle@hec.org	96813
9	Stacey Aldrich	Hawaii State Public Library System	stacey.aldrich@librarieshawaii.org	96813
10	Susan Tai	Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii, Inc.	susantaikaneko@gmail.com	96813
11	Tangent Systems	Tangent Inc.	mark@tangent-inc.com	96813
12	Todd Robertson	Hyperspective Studios, Inc.	todd@hyperspective.com	96789
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SCR-12

Submitted on: 3/26/2022 10:52:44 AM

Testimony for EET on 3/30/2022 3:20:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
L Basha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The investment in broadband cannot be underrated and has the potential to improve many aspects of life in Hawai'i. Increasing access to broadband in rural areas will be key in connecting those areas into the digital infrastructure allowing population growth without being isolated. Expanded broadband has great promise to impact the affordable housing shortage in Hawai'i.

Lawrence Basha

Kailua