

**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
KA 'OIHANA HO'OMOHALA PĀ'OIHANA, 'IMI WAIWAI
A HO'OMĀKA'IKĀ'I

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

CHRIS J. SADAYASU
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of
CHRIS J. SADAYASU
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Tuesday, March 14, 2023
1:30 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229

In consideration of
HB 1408, HD3
RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY.

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports HB1408, HD3** that establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

Over the course of the last three years, the COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the need for digital equity for all of Hawai'i's residents. In the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act (2022) the federal government recognized the importance of digital equity and created several programs including the Digital Equity Planning Grant and the Digital Equity Capacity Grant program. There is a one-year period for the development of the statewide digital equity plan at which point the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) will issue their notice of funding opportunity for the capacity grants.

The digital equity grant program created by **HB 1408, HD3** will not only help to fund and build capacity in Hawai'i's communities, both urban and rural, sooner than the federal programs but it can also be applied specifically to the needs of the smaller frontline organizations, be more flexible and meet the local priorities in addressing issues of digital adoption, affordability, navigation, literacy, access to devices, emergency response, translation services, etc.

We support this bill provided that its passage does not replace or adversely impact priorities indicated in our Executive Budget.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.



STATE OF HAWAII
STATE COUNCIL
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
1010 RICHARDS STREET, Room 122
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813
TELEPHONE: (808) 586-8100 FAX: (808) 586-7543
March 14, 2023

The Honorable Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
The Thirty-Second Legislature
State Capitol
State of Hawai'i
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Senator DeCoite and Committee Members:

SUBJECT: HB1408 HD3 RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY.

The Hawai'i State Council on Developmental Disabilities **supports HB1408 HD3**, which establishes the digital equity grant program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State. Appropriates funds.

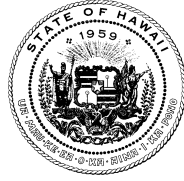
Technology has become vital for our Intellectual/Developmental Disability (I/DD) population to live independently. However, broadband access is key for most new technologies relying on Wi-Fi. Individuals with I/DD who are dependent on others to assist them with their mobility can reach a greater level of independence if they have reliable access to internet services. Internet access allows individuals from their homes to independently access telehealth services, virtual meetings, legislative hearings, and other state programs that require computer access.

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. Funding remains a high need to continue to provide individuals we serve with affordable internet access. We are hopeful that digital equity will come with the passing of this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB1408 HD3**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM
'OIHANA HALE WAIHONA PUKE AUPUNI O KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII'
OFFICE OF THE STATE LIBRARIAN
44 MERCHANT STREET
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Tuesday, March 14, 2023

1:30 PM

Conference Room 229

**By Stacey A. Aldrich
State Librarian**

H.B. 1408, H.D. 3 RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY

To: Sen. Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Sen. Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

The Hawaii State Public Library System (HSPLS) **strongly supports H.B. 1408, H.D. 3**, which establishes the digital equity grant program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

With the enactment of Act 232 last year, the State Librarian has played a key role in increasing access to digital tools and promoting digital literacy in communities across the state. The grant program and funding established by H.B. 1408 will broaden the reach of these ongoing efforts, increasing digital literacy among members of the public and raising their competitiveness in an economy defined by the ability to use digital tools.

Hawaii's public libraries have long been vital community resources equipping residents with knowledge and skills for the digital age. HSPLS enthusiastically embraces its continuing role in preparing everyone in our communities - from keiki who need skills for education, to kupuna who need to access government resources and manage general day-to-day life activities such as shopping, medical appointments – for success in the digital world.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide supporting testimony on this measure.



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

Legislative Testimony

Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

Testimony Presented Before the
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
Tuesday, March 14, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

By

Garret T. Yoshimi, Vice President for Information Technology/Chief Information Officer
University of Hawai'i System

HB 1408 HD3 – RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Hawai'i, representing the State's broadband interests, supports the intent of HB 1408 HD3.

The proposed state digital equity grant program along with state funding support would provide needed funding opportunities to support digital equity efforts that would directly benefit communities with the greatest needs. Based on the proposed timing, this program would provide funding opportunities in advance of the anticipated National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) State Digital Equity Capacity Grant program, and could be used to accelerate the delivery of digital equity and literacy benefits to our communities.

We would recommend that the efforts be fully coordinated with other statewide digital equity efforts, including the state's digital equity plan, the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Five-Year Plan, and work funded under the Tribal Broadband Connectivity program with DHHL (all three efforts funded by NTIA).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 1408 HD3.



STATE OF HAWAII
HAWAII CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION & ADAPTATION
COMMISSION
POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Co-Chairs:
Chair, DLNR
Director, OPSD

Commissioners:
Chair, Senate AEN
Chair, Senate WTL
Chair, House EEP
Chair, House WAL
Chairperson, HTA
Chairperson, DOA
CEO, OHA
Chairperson, DHHL
Director, DBEDT
Director, DOT
Director, DOH
Chairperson, DOE
Director, C+C DPP
Director, Maui DP
Director, Hawai'i DP
Director, Kaua'i DP
The Adjutant General
Manager, CZM

**Testimony of
Leah Laramee
Coordinator, Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission**

**Before the Senate Committee on
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM**

**Tuesday, March 14, 2023
1:30 PM
State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 229**

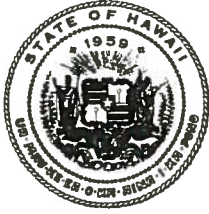
**In support of
House Bill 1408 House Draft 3
RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

House Bill 1408 HD3 establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State and awards funds. **The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (Commission) supports this measure.**

Hawai'i's Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission recognizes that ground transportation contributes significantly to Hawai'i's share of greenhouse gas emissions. Both the digital divide and the climate crisis are global issues that have a disproportionate impact on low- and middle-income families. Sustainably closing the internet connectivity and usage gaps in low- and middle-income markets can also help in the fight against global warming.

Helping as many people as possible to connect to digital resources can also have transformative societal and environmental benefits, on both a local and global scale. According to a 2019 report by the Department of Agriculture, deploying universal broadband can create an extra \$47-\$65 billion each year for the U.S. economy. In the agriculture sector, farmers could significantly reduce their costs through the use of precision technology; for example, yield monitoring could save farmers \$25 per acre in input costs and weather modeling could prevent an average of \$264,000 per year in specialty crop loss per farmer. At the household level, deployment of universal broadband together with digital energy efficiency technologies is estimated to lower residential electricity bills by as much as one-fifth. The Digital Equity Grant Program is a good first step in achieving an equitable resilient future.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of this measure.



DISABILITY AND COMMUNICATION ACCESS BOARD

1010 Richards Street, Room 118 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Ph. (808) 586-8121 (V) • TTY (808) 586-8162 • Fax (808) 586-8129

March 14, 2023

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

House Bill 1408 HD3 – Relating to Digital Equity

The Disability and Communication Access Board (DCAB) supports House Bill 1408 HD3 – Relating to Digital Equity. This bill would establish the digital equity grant program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

Digital equity provides persons with disabilities equal access digital technology, including broadband. Broadband access for all should be affordable, especially for underserved communities to foster their economic development, increase 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,

KIRBY L. SHAW
Executive Director

March 13, 2023

Committee on Economic Development and Tourism
Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice Chair



Working together for Kapolei

Tuesday, March 14, 2023, 1:30 p.m.
Conference Rm. 229 and via Videoconference

RE: HB 1408 HD3 RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY

Dear Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai and members of the Committee:

My name is Kiran Polk, and I am the Executive Director of the Kapolei Chamber of Commerce.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is an advocate for businesses in the Kapolei region which includes Waipahu to Ka'ena Point. The Chamber works on behalf of its members and the entire business community to improve the regional and State economic climate and help Kapolei businesses thrive. We are a member-driven, member-supported organization representing the interests of all types of business: small, medium or large, for profit or non-profit businesses or sole proprietorship.

The Kapolei Chamber is also a member of the Broadband Hui.

The Kapolei Chamber of Commerce is in strong support of HB 1408 HD3, relating to Digital Equity which establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects.

This funding would support and adopt the goals set forth in the State's Digital Equity Declaration. The Digital Equity Grant Program will help to ensure digital literacy and equitable access to internet to help eliminate the "digital divide" and help our underserved communities including those in West O'ahu.

We also need to increase digital capacity in West O'ahu for our small businesses to spur on economic growth and bridge some of the gaps existing today including access and capacity issues with online learning, pursuit of employment opportunities, and access to essential services online.

The need for digital equity is apparent even in the City and County of Honolulu and is not only applicable to rural areas of our state. West O'ahu's growing population of almost 200,000 includes the Wai'anae Coast, 'Ewa, and Waipahu. In Kapolei and 'Ewa alone households are expected to exceed 56,000 by the year 2035 and over the next 30 years the population in Kapolei and 'Ewa will increase by 40 percent and housing by 52 percent. The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander population in East Honolulu is 3.4% and 39.7% in Wai'anae. The number of persons living in poverty in Wai'anae the is 24.4%.

The funding provided in this grant is needed now and will support community-based organizations and non-profits to do the work needing to be done to provide digital equity until federal funding becomes available.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony and comments.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K Polk".

Kiran Polk
Executive Director

1001 Kamokila Boulevard, Campbell Building Suite 250, Kapolei, Hawaii 96707

Written Statement of
Jeannine Souki
Sr. Manager – Government & Regulatory Affairs

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM

March 14, 2023, 1:30 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 229, Videoconference

**SUPPORT FOR:
H.B. 1408, HD2 – RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

To: Senator Lynn DeCoite, Chair
Senator Glenn Wakai, Vice-Chair
Members of the Committee on Energy, Economic Development & Tourism

Re: Testimony providing support for HB 1408, HD2

Aloha Honorable Chair, Vice-Chair, and Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to submit support for House Bill 1408, HD2, establishing a Digital Equity grant program within the Hawai'i Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism's Broadband and Digital Equity Office.

Hawaiian Telcom supports this measure to address digital equity needs for residents and businesses in Hawai'i. Having a state digital equity grant program is valuable to ensuring that no one is left behind and that anyone who needs support is able to access digital literacy programs that develop their individual capacity to participate in an accelerating digital economy. This funding is also needed to train digital navigators to qualify households for the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), making broadband services and access to computers attainable for individuals and families.

Hawaiian Telcom plays a significant role in building our high-speed broadband network and continues to invest hundreds of millions of dollars annually to improve our State's broadband infrastructure. We also support digital equity with our ACP and Lifeline programs that offer discounted services to income-eligible residents. ACP-qualifying households essentially receive free broadband services with a discount of up to \$30 per month, and up to \$75 per month for beneficiaries living on Hawaiian Homelands.

Hawaiian Telcom believes that the digital equity grant program will help bridge the digital divide by funding digital literacy and access programs so that individuals and communities are able to fully participate in an increasingly digital world and keep pace with emerging technologies.

And, with the temporary infusion of federal funds for broadband infrastructure and digital equity programs through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) programs, we continue to urge the State to leverage opportunities for public and private sector investments to address broadband and digital equity access, especially in unserved and underserved areas that need the most support.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide support for HB 1408, HD2.



Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

Date: March 14, 2023
Time: 1:30 p.m.
Where: State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
RE: Supporting HB 1408 HD3 Relating to Digital Equity

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

As members of the Broadband Hui, the listed organizations and individuals SUPPORT HB 1408 HD3, which establishes the Digital Equity Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects.

Over the past two years, 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.

One of the components critical to the progress of digital equity for our community is that of funding capacity sooner than the federal programs which this bill aims to address.

Work to continue to address these needs are now. This funding will be targeted to support Hawaii's local, community non-profits to maintain their momentum on digital equity until federal funding becomes available.

For these reasons, we kindly request you support HB1408. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. (Please see names on the following page.)

Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HB1408 HD3

Logos of Supporting Organizations



Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HB1408 HD3

Name	Organization	Email	Zip code
Ken Farm		farmk@hawaii.edu	96817
Lynn Otaguro	O`ahu County Democrats Digital Equity Committee	lmotaguro@yahoo.com	96821
Angelina Mercado	Hawai'i State Coalition Against Domestic Violence	amercado@hscadv.org	98614
DOUGLASS S ADAMS	County of Hawaii Dept of Research & Development	douglass.adams@hawaiicounty.gov	96720
Jill Takasaki Canfield	Hawaii Literacy	jill.takasaki.canfield@hawaiiliteracy.org	96817
Kaleo Bennett	'Auamo Collaborative	kokua@auamocollaborative.org	96720
Mayson Asano Jr		molokaishaka@yahoo.com	96748
Nicholas Winfrey	Maui United Way	nicholas@mauiunitedway.org	96708
Peter Dames	Servco Pacific Inc	peter.dames@servco.com	96814
WANDA ANAE-ONISHI		wanaeonishi@gmail.com	96797
Riley Saito	Succeed Hawaii, LLC	rsaito@succeedhawaii.com	96740
David Sun-Miyashiro	HawaiiKidsCAN	david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org	96814
Jaclyn Kaina	Kauai Economic Development Board	jkaina@kedb.com	96766
Matt Stevens	Hawai'i Workforce Funders Collaborative	matt@hawaiiwork.org	96755
Herb Lee, Jr.	Pacific American Foundation	herblee@thepaf.org	96734
Alexis Ching		alexis@ewaluindustries.org	96740
Nathan Prescott	County of Kauai - Office of Economic Development	nprescott@kauai.gov	96766
Rachel Solemsaas	Hawai'i Community College	rsolems@hawaii.edu	96720
Mary Oneha	Waimanalo Health Center	moneha@waimanalohealth.org	96795
LORNA STRAND		LORNA.STRAND@GMAIL.COM	96701
David Earles	Junior Achievement of Hawaii	david@jahawaii.org	96815
Deborah Bond-Upson	LearningBond	deborah@learningbond.org	96734
Wayne Buente		wayne.buente@gmail.com	96826
Ka'ala Souza	Digital Ready Hawaii	kaala@digitalreadyhawaii.org	96734
Jeanne Skog	Skog Rasmussen LLC	jskog@skograsmussen.com	96793
Georgette Stevens	'Ōlelo Community Media	gstevens@olelo.org	96819
Joseph Passantino	Ke'elikolani Middle School	Joseph.passantino@k12.hi.us	96813
Jay April, President & CEO	Akaku Maui County Community Media	jay@akaku.org	96732
Jeanne Skog	Economic Development Alliance of Hawaii	jskog2435@gmail.com	96708
Kiran Polk	Kapolei Chamber of Commerce	kiranpolk@gmail.com	96707

Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HB1408 HD3

Name	Organization	Email	Zip code
Keilee Simms		keilees@keyproject.org	96744
Judith Mikami	Molokai Rural Health Community Association	jmikami44@gmail.com	96748
Gregory DiBenedetto		gregdib@yahoo.com	96778
Dr. Adrienne Dillard, Ph.D., MSW, LSW	Kula no na Po'e Hawaii o Papakolea, Kewalo, Kalawahine	kula.papakolea@gmail.com	96813
Sean Taketa McLaughlin		seantaketa@gmail.com	96817
Joseph Lapilio	Waianae Economic Development Council	j.lapilio@thewedc.com	96792
Alexandra Slous	Perspective Media	ali@createwithperspective.com	96734
Mahealani Keo	Nurture Cultivate Inc	mahealani.keo@ncihawaii.org	96717
Kuulei Arce	MOLOKAI RURAL HEALTH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION	22kuulei@gmail.com	96729
Linda Clark		clarkl004@gmail.com	96713
Jenny Miller	EducationSuperHighway	jenny.miller@educationsuperhighway.org	80303
Todd Robertson	Hyperspective Studios, Inc.	todd@hyperspective.com	96813
Brian Dote	Tapiki LLC	brian@tapiki.com	96797
Daniel C. Smith, PhD		dancsmith@rocketmail.com	96782
Ian Kitajima	PICHTR	ian.kitajima@pichtr.org	96814
Crystal Yamasaki	Crystal Clear Communications	crystalclearcomms@gmail.com	96817



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**The State Legislature
Committee On Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
Tuesday, March 14, 2023
Conference Room 229, 1:30 p.m.**

TO: The Honorable Lynn DeCoite, Chair
RE: Support for H.B. 1408, HD 3 Relating to Digital Equity

Aloha Chair DeCoite and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keali'i Lopez and I am the State Director for AARP Hawai'i. AARP is a nonpartisan, social impact organization that advocates for individuals age 50 and older. We have a membership of nearly 38 million nationwide and nearly 140,000 in Hawaii. We advocate at the state and federal level for the issues that matter most to older adults and their families, including telehealth. **AARP supports H.B. 1408 HD3** which establishes the digital equity grant program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

The pandemic has underscored vast disparities in high-speed internet access and has also underscored the importance of high-speed internet access to older adults. Achieving digital equity is especially important for older adults: reliable, affordable high-speed internet access is critical to the well-being of adults (e.g., telehealth, connection to family and friends, civic engagement, distance learning, remote work, etc.) AARP recognizes the value and significant benefits of digital technology that can improve the lives of kupuna. While more and more of our members, especially those aged 50-59, are using their mobile devices and tablets to access information about their health, we still need to reach those over the age 65 whose technology adoption rate is only 64%. Achieving digital equity requires addressing disparities in access and adoption. Thank you very much for the opportunity to testify in support of H.B 1408, HD3.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keali'i S. Lopez".

Keali'i S. López
State Director

HB-1408-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/11/2023 2:43:21 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/14/2023 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leimomi Khan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Support as a means to level boadband access and opportunities to urban and rural areas, especially critical as broadband access is necessary to enable neighbor island and rural areas to get better access to health care education, and jobs.

HB-1408-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/12/2023 1:32:09 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/14/2023 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Caroline Azelski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In support of HD3. Thank you.

LATE

HB-1408-HD-3

Submitted on: 3/13/2023 6:05:41 PM

Testimony for EET on 3/14/2023 1:30:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kaala Souza	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in full support of any government support for digital equity efforts in Hawaii. In the 1800s King Kamehameha III, *Kauikeaouli*, said "He aupuni palapala ko'u," intending that the Hawaii would be a place of literacy. He backed up the proclamation with support by creating incentives for teachers, constructing schools, paying for paper and other supplies, and generally creating a culture of learning the palapala and leading by example.

The problem of digital illiteracy and the divide it creates requires a similarly supported effort from everyone in the state.

Digital Equity involves three main pieces:

1. Devices: People need to have access to computers, specifically in desktop and laptop form factors. Refurbished computers cost between \$70 and \$150 each
2. Broadband Internet: People need access to actual broadband speeds. this is an economic development issue.
3. Skills: People need skills to be able to leverage the devices and broadband access to work, live and connect. those at the lower level of skill (<1) need in person classes. Those with higher skillsets can utilize online resources to learn what they need to learn.

Our state, at a minimum, has 30% of it's workforce unable to pass a basic computer assessment. That's 200,000 residents NOT including kupuna - it's just the workforce.

Hawaii has an opportunity to once again be a leader in literacy -- this time it's digital.