



**DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**
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Statement of
CHRIS J. SADAYASU
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Wednesday, March 22, 2023
2:00 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 309

In consideration of

HR 58 / HCR 56

**REQUESTING THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE TO
INCREASE ACCESS TO WIFI IN PUBLIC PARKS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.**

Chair Perruso, Vice Chair Kapela and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **supports the intent of HR 58 / HCR 56** that requests the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office (HBDEO) to increase access to wifi in public parks throughout the State.

The last three years of the COVID-19 pandemic has spotlighted the need for broadband infrastructure and digital equity to help close the digital divide for all of Hawaii's residents especially those in rural unserved and underserved communities. Toward this end, the federal government has seen fit to build robust broadband infrastructure and to fund broadband equity and digital equity programs across the country.

In order to achieve the goals set forth by Federal programs like the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD), the HBDEO can assess the current level of Internet access in the parks and with the help of the Department of Land and Natural Resources and the Counties, determine the efficacy of increasing wifi access in the parks.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.