

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

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
GOVERNOR

SYLVIA LUKE
LT. GOVERNOR

JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
DIRECTOR

DANE K. WICKER
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of
JAMES KUNANE TOKIOKA
Director
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism
before the
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND TOURISM

Tuesday, February 6, 2024
1:01PM
State Capitol, Conference Room #229

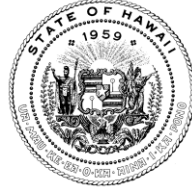
In consideration of
SB3048
RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and members of the Committee. The Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT) **strongly supports** SB3048, an Administration bill, that establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

To run in parallel with the various broadband infrastructure projects across the State for the next several years, digital equity programs in communities are essential for the social and economic well-being of the residents in the State. Digital access and digital skills for remote work, school, and social services such as unemployment claims, telehealth, and other essential services are critically important particularly in the rural and socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

This measure will enable the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office (HBDEO) to work with rural and underserved communities to identify and address barriers to digital equity and to establish a digital equity grant program so that individuals and communities in the State have the access and the ability to be full participants in the digital economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



STATE OF HAWAII | KA MOKU'ĀINA 'O HAWAI'I
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
KA 'OIHANA PILI KĀLEPA
335 MERCHANT STREET, ROOM 310
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HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809
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SYLVIA LUKE
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR | KA HOPE KIA'ĀINA

NADINE Y. ANDO
DIRECTOR | KA LUNA HO'OKELE

DEAN I HAZAMA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR | KA HOPE LUNA HO'OKELE

Testimony of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

Before the
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
Tuesday, February 6, 2024
1:01 p.m.
Conference Room 229 & Via Videoconference

On the following measure:
S.B. 3048, RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND
DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

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

My name is Randy Leong, and I am the Cable Television Administrator of the Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' Cable Television Division. The Department supports this bill.

The purpose of this bill is to identify and address remaining obstacles to digital equity in the State and to establish the digital equity grant program, to be implemented and administered by the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office under the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism (DBEDT), to award grants for digital equity projects that will increase digital literacy and broadband and digital access for rural and socio-economically disadvantaged populations across the State.

Digital equity is essential to enable all residents of our State to fully participate in today's economy and society. The Department recognizes the benefit of a state-level grant program focused on closing the digital divide for those most in need by funding

Testimony of DCCA
S.B. 3048

projects to be conceived and implemented by experienced stakeholders to achieve universal access. These projects could help to bridge the State's digital equity gap and allow all residents to benefit from the services and opportunities afforded by digital access no matter where they live or their circumstances.

The Department thus strongly supports this bill but defers to DBEDT and the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office on the specific provisions of the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill.



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
February 06, 2024

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

Dear Senator DeCoite, and Committee members:

SUBJECT: SB3048 RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

The Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities **SUPPORTS SB3048**, which establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

The intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) population relies significantly on access to digital technology to remain engaged members of the community. We recognize the importance of this measure in allocating funding and supporting the development of vital broadband infrastructure for underserved communities across the state. Hawaii's I/DD population resides in these communities, and improved broadband equity is essential to enhancing their access to and affordability of digital resources. The I/DD population, being more reliant on telehealth services, stands to benefit greatly from increased access to high-speed internet and improved broadband equity. Telehealth utilization is particularly high within our community, and the improved access provided by this measure will support the health needs of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **support of SB3048**.

Sincerely,

Daintry Bartoldus
Executive Administrator

February 5, 2024

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



Working together for Kapolei

Tuesday February 6, 2024, 1:01 p.m.
Conference Rm. 229 and via Videoconference

RE: SB3048 RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE

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 SB3048** that establishes the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

This measure would provide the programming needed for future funding opportunities. These opportunities will 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 is 24.4%.

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

Respectfully,

Kiran Polk
Executive Director

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

Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism

Date: February 6, 2024
Time: 1:01 p.m.
Where: State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference
RE: **SUPPORT of SB3048 - Relating to the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office**

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

As members of the Broadband Hui, the listed organizations and individuals **strongly support SB3048** which would establish a Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects in the State.

Over the past four years during and since COVID, 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.

Through the work of the Broadband Hui members, we have supported broadband infrastructure development in rural and socio-economically disadvantaged communities, provided digital devices for students and families and digital literacy programs for kūpuna, 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.

This measure will enable the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office (HBDEO) to work with our communities to identify and plan fund projects to address barriers to digital equity. The digital equity grant program will be set up so there is a mechanism to deploy digital equity projects supported by HBDEO whether funded by the Federal government or other entities.

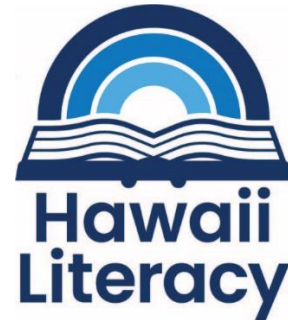
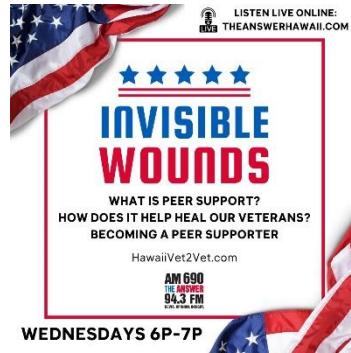
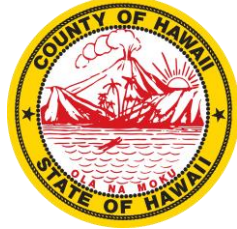
For these reasons, we kindly request you support **SB3048**.
Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

(Please see the organizations and names of individuals on the following pages.)

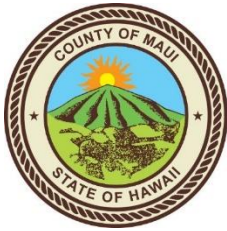


Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting SB3048

Logos of Supporting Organizations



Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting SB3048



Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting SB3048

Name	Organization	Email	Zip code
Lynn Otaguro	O`ahu County Democrats Digital Equity Committee	lmotaguro@yahoo.com	96821
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
Nicholas Winfrey	Maui United Way	nicholas@mauiunitedway.org	96708
David Sun-Miyashiro	HawaiiKidsCAN	david.miyashiro@hawaiikidscan.org	96814
Alexis Ching	Ewalu Industries	alexis@ewaluindustries.org	96740
Deborah Bond-Upson	LearningBond	deborah@learningbond.org	96734
Ka`ala Souza	Digital Ready Hawaii	kaala@digitalreadyhawaii.org	96734
Jeanne Skog	Skog Rasmussen LLC	jskog@skograsmussen.com	96793
Joseph Passantino	Ke`elikolani Middle School	Joseph.passantino@k12.hi.us	96813
Kiran Polk	Kapolei Chamber of Commerce	kiranpolk@gmail.com	96707
Sean Taketa McLaughlin		seantaketa@gmail.com	96817
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 96789
Daniel C. Smith, PhD		dancsmith@rocketmail.com	96782
Crystal Yamasaki	Crystal Clear Communications	crystalclearcomms@gmail.com	96817
Jacqui Hoover	Hawaii Economic Development Board, Inc. Hawaii Leeward Planning Conference	jhoover@hiedb.org	96743
Daron Nishimoto	EO Solutions, LLC	Daron.nishimoto@e-osolutions.com	89119
Lisa Seikai Darcy	Share Your Mana	lisa@shareyourmana.org	96768
Alex Fielding	Privateer Space	af@privateer.com	96753
Michael K. Peacock	Hawaii Vet 2 Vet Inc.	mikepeacock@hawaiivet2vet.com	96813
Marc Sanders	Hana Business Council	marc@hanamaui.com	96713
Edward Sun	Sun Global Broadband	esun1@hawaiiantel.net	96822
Rebecca J. `I. Soon	Solutions Pacific	rebecca@sphawaii.com	96817

Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting SB3048

Name	Organization	Email	Zip code
Doug Simons	Institute for Astronomy, Univ. of Hawaii	dsimons@hawaii.edu	96822
Christine Matsuda	Pa‘akai Communications	christine@paakaicomunications.com	96817
Jolie A. Jenkins	County of Maui, Office of the Mayor	Jolie.Jenkins@co.maui.hi.us	96793
Mark Iha	Tangent Inc.	mark@tangent-inc.com	96813
Connie Mitchell	Institute for Human Services	conniem@ihshawaii.org	96817
Ilima Ho-Lastimosa	Ke Kula Nui O Waimānalo	ilima888@gmail.com	96795
Lori Okuda		wcpgirl@gmail.com	96782
Jerry Isdale	Maui Institute of Art and Technology LLC	jerry@mioat.com	96708
Jenifer Sunrise Winter		jwinter@hawaii.edu	96821
Lei Fountain	The Arc in Hawaii	Leif@thearcinhawaii.org	96782
Micah Chao		sungyanc@hawaii.edu	96814
Curtis Kropar	Hawaiian Hope Org	Curtis@hawaiianhope.org	96817
John Desfor,	Hawai'i State Rural Health Association	johnd6@hawaii.edu	96737
Carson Block	Carson Block Consulting	librarylandtech@gmail.com	
Rich Matsuda	W. M. Keck Observatory	rmatsuda@keck.hawaii.edu	96743
Michele Mitsumori,	IT Reuse HI	itreusehi@gmail.com	96720
Debbie Cabebe	Maui Economic Opportunity	debbie.cabebe@meoinc.org	96793
Tony Velasco	City and County of Honolulu IT	tvelasco@honolulu.gov	96813
Pamela Tumpap	Maui Chamber of Business	pamela@mauichamber.com	96793



Testimony Presented before the
Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
Tuesday, February 6, 2024 at 1:01pm

SB3048 – Relating to the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office

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

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. Vibrant Hawai'i supports SB3048, which would establish the digital equity grant program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

Vibrant Hawai'i is committed to advancing digital equity and is a proud member of the Hawai'i Island Digital Equity Collaborative (HIDEC), led by the County of Hawai'i. At Vibrant Hawai'i, one part of our mission is to shift deficit narratives, systems, and policy that perpetuate poverty and inequity. We value flexibility and learning that lead to transformation, and we demonstrate this by practicing makawalu and acknowledging that we each hold one piece that is part of something bigger. That is the basis of our support for this bill.

In January 2022, Vibrant Hawai'i engaged community-based instructors to distribute refurbished laptops, facilitate computer skills workshops in rural communities, and connect residents with the Emergency Broadband Benefit. We were able to reach 300 participants in a 90-day project period where upon completion of the program, 91% of participants either strongly agreed or agreed to being more confident using email, 78% were willing to use a computer for online health appointments, 55% shared they would use a computer to seek employment and submit an employment application online, and 84% were willing to participate in future online learning opportunities.

The outcomes of this project are an example of how Vibrant Hawai'i and other organizations can work in collaboration with the State to leverage government resources by deploying digital equity projects to covered populations across all islands. We look forward to future opportunities to partner with State agencies to reach even more communities on Hawai'i Island.

Recognizing that this bill does not provide an appropriation, Vibrant Hawai'i suggests an amendment to the bill to add an appropriation that would help support the launch and success of the proposed digital equity grants.

Vibrant Hawai'i supports SB3048 for the reasons above and we kindly request that you pass this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

Na'u me ka 'oia'i'o,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janice Ikeda".

Janice Ikeda
Executive Director

VIBRANT
HAWAI'I





Chamber of Commerce HAWAII

The Voice of Business

**Testimony to the Senate Committee on Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism
Tuesday, February 6, 2024, at 1:01PM
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference**

RE: SB3048 Relating to the Hawaii Broadband Digital Equity Office

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

The Chamber of Commerce Hawaii ("The Chamber") **supports SB 3048**, which establishes the Digital Equity Office and grant program to award and deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

Addressing digital equity through broadband access and digital literacy tools is one of the most important steps to modernizing Hawaii's economy and bringing all our industries into the 21st century. By having digital equity throughout the state, this will allow Hawaii to attract new industries and continue to diversify the economy. Given the economic importance of achieving both broadband and digital equity, the Chamber supports this bill.

This bill aims to increase digital equity throughout our state and provides assurances for all individuals and communities in the state to have the information capacity needed to participate in society and contribute to our economy. This is especially important in light of Hawaii's rapidly growing tech industry. There is a need for our state to have a highly skilled workforce ready to match the workforce demands provided by tech companies looking to invest in our state. With the passage of this bill, our current and future workforce can be equipped with the skills to fulfill these jobs and contribute to the state's success.

As members of the Broadband Hui, the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii supports broadband infrastructure development in rural communities, equitable digital devices and internet connectivity for students and families, increasing access to telehealth, low-cost internet options, and a more equitable digital future overall.

The Chamber is Hawaii's leading statewide business advocacy organization, representing about 2,000+ businesses. Approximately 80% of our members are small businesses with less than 20 employees. As the "Voice of Business" in Hawaii, the organization works on behalf of members and the entire business community to improve the state's economic climate and to foster positive action on issues of common concern.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

SB-3048

Submitted on: 2/4/2024 10:26:56 PM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Michele Mitsumori	Testifying for IT Reuse Hawai'i	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair DeCoite, Vice Chair Wakai, and Members of the Energy, Economic Development, and Tourism Committee,

As the Project Coordinator of IT Reuse Hawai'i and a member of the Broadband Hui, I **strongly support SB 3048**, which would establish a Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects in the State.

Over the past four years during and since COVID, the organizations of the Broadband Hui have collaborated, each within our own ability, to increase Hawai'i's digital capacity, thereby supporting the continuity of social connections, education, employment, and access to other essential services.

IT Reuse Hawai'i seeks to increase the digital capacity of Hawai'i County by providing refurbished computers to low-income individuals and families that do not have a computer in their households (excluding smart phones and Chromebooks). We also seek to reduce electronic waste and retain valuable assets on our island by refurbishing functioning computers, in partnership with Hawai'i Community College business technology students.

SB 3048 will enable the Hawai'i Broadband and Digital Equity Office to work with our communities to identify and address barriers to digital equity. The digital equity grant program will be set up so there is a mechanism to deploy digital equity projects within the HBDEO.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 3048,

Michele Mitsumori

Written Statement of

Jeannine Souki, Senior Manager – Government & Regulatory Affairs

**BEFORE THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM**

February 6, 2023, 1:01 PM

State Capitol, Conference Room 229 & Videoconference

SUPPORT FOR:

**S.B. 3048 – RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY
OFFICE**

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

Re: Testimony providing support for SB 3048

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

Thank you for this opportunity to submit support for Senate Bill 3048 to establish a Digital Equity Grant Program within the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office. If established, this fund would endeavor to leverage the work of community and non-profit groups to provide digital literacy training for individuals to participate in the fast-growing digital world.

Having a high-speed fiber internet connection and services to address the digital equity needs of all households opens up a world of opportunity. Broadband is essential for business and government operations, delivering telemedicine, education, remote work, staying in touch with family and friends, and so much more. Fiber-optic cables carry 10,000 times more bandwidth than traditional copper cables, enabling fast upload speeds and a superior experience with services such as video calls and security cameras. Fiber technology is also more energy-efficient, more durable, and less susceptible to elements such as water and electromagnetic interference. Hawaiian Telcom is the only Hawai'i internet service provider that has invested more than \$1 billion over the last ten years to expand and support its fiber optic network and serve its customers.

In 2023, Hawaiian Telcom awarded \$140,000 to community organizations working to address digital equity and empower communities across the state. In addition, Hawaiian Telcom expanded its fiber-optics network to 65,000 new locations and is on track to build 60,000 new locations in 2024.

Hawaiian Telcom is also bridging digital divide as a participating service provider in the federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). ACP provides internet service discounts of up to \$30 per month for eligible households and up to \$75 per month for residents on Hawaiian Home Lands. Hawaiian Telcom continues to offer federal Lifeline discounts for internet or telephone services to qualified residents.

Since the FCC launched ACP on December 31, 2021, the depletion of \$14 billion Congress appropriated for this federal program has been swifter than originally anticipated. The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) recently ordered all participating service providers to take steps to wind down their programs because the ACP will run out of funding around April 2024. This wrinkle should give us all pause to consider that while the State will see a temporary infusion of approximately \$14 million toward digital equity services, there is no additional federal funding for continued operations or services beyond the initial investment. Ostensibly, it is in the State's interest to fully commit to investing its digital equity award to support the work of community and non-profit organizations to deliver digital literacy and access services to those in need.

Hawaiian Telcom appreciates the opportunity to testify and offer support for Senate Bill 3048.

LATE

SB-3048

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 7:39:02 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Rosie F Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I support SB3048.

Mahalo nui

LATE

SB-3048

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 7:44:16 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Gene Ross K. Davis	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I support SB3048

Mahalo nui

SB-3048

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 8:28:55 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sherry Sasada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in support of Bill SB3048 because living ion Molokai, digital access is very important. We found out that during COVID that there are so many households on this island that could not do remote learning due to the fact that they did not have access to the internet. Reasons for this is because of locations where internet was not available as well as the cost of getting internet. We need to ensure that those who rely on the internet to either attend school or for employment, it should be available to everyone based on the critirea stated in this bill.

Mahalo!

LATE

SB-3048

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 8:43:51 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Sheron Sasada	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because I live on a rural island and having internet is important these days. Especially for finding jobs, applying for different resources, and so forth,

LATE

SB-3048

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 9:49:07 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Faith Tuipulotu	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I support SB3048

Mahali, Faith Tuipulotu

LATE

SB-3048

Submitted on: 2/6/2024 10:32:30 AM

Testimony for EET on 2/6/2024 1:01:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Iolani Kuoha	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB3048 Establishing the Digital Equity Grant Program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State.

Mahalo,

Iolani Kuoha