



**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

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DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Statement of  
**CHRIS J. SADAYASU**  
Director  
Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism  
before the  
**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS**

Tuesday, April 4, 2023  
10:30 AM  
State Capitol, Conference Room 211

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

Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran 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  
April 4, 2023

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

Dear Senator Dela Cruz 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.

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



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

## ‘ŌNAEHANA KULANUI O HAWAII

### Legislative Testimony

### Hō'ike Mana'o I Mua O Ka 'Aha'ōlelo

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Ways and Means  
Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 10:30 a.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 Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran, 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  
WAYS AND MEANS**

**Tuesday, April 4, 2023  
10:30 AM**

**State Capitol, Via Videoconference, Conference Room 211**

**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.



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**The State Legislature  
Senate Committee On Ways and Means  
Tuesday, April 4, 2023  
Conference Room 211, 10:30 a.m.**

TO: The Honorable Donovan Dela Cruz, Chair  
RE: Support for H.B. 1408, HD 3 Relating to Digital Equity

Aloha Chair Dela Cruz 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". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Keali'i S. López  
State Director

(insert letterhead)

Testimony Presented before the  
Senate Ways and Means Committee  
Tuesday, April 4, 2023 at 10:30am

HB1408 HD3 – Relating to Digital Equity

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

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Vibrant Hawai'i supports HB1408 HD3, 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.

Vibrant Hawai'i supports HB1408 HD3 for the reasons above and we kindly request that you pass this measure. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.



Senate Committee on Ways and Means

Date: April 4, 2023  
Time: 10:30 a.m.  
Where: State Capitol, Conference Room 211 & Videoconference  
RE: Supporting HB1408 HD3, Establishes the digital equity grant program to award grants to applicants to deploy digital equity projects to covered populations in the State. Appropriates funds.

Aloha mai e Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran 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, namely training and devices. Over the past three years, our organizations have collaborated, each within their own ability, to increase Hawai'i's digital capacity, thereby supporting 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.

We believe that the need for digital training applies to our many vulnerable populations such as kupuna, disabled, rural communities, immigrants, homeless, and veterans. Based on the U.S. Census American Community Survey, up to 40,000 households in Hawaii need devices and training to fully participate in telehealth, education, and economic advancement.

Working through the counties, the University of Hawaii, the Hawaii State Public Library System, the Department of Education's adult schools, and numerous community-based organizations on each island, the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office (HBDEO) will broaden training, mobilize trainers, and provide access to devices through digital equity grants. The supply of refurbished laptop computers for example is unlikely to meet the demand so securing modestly priced new units by the agencies noted will be a positive solution and facilitate training.

It is critical to the progress of digital equity to "spool up" local training capacity in advance of federal programs. Funding of this bill will target Hawaii's local, community nonprofits to maintain and increase their digital equity efforts while becoming ready for the planned



## **Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HB1408**

federal infusion. A robust digital equity program is required by the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment infrastructure program funded by the bipartisan infrastructure law.

For these reasons, we kindly request you support HB1408 and adequately fund it. (\$5 million was in the original bill.) Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. (Please see names on the following page.)

Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HB1408

Logos of Supporting Organizations



## Hawaii Broadband Hui Members & Organizations Supporting HB1408

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	Ewalu Industries	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

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
Cheryl A. Cross	C. A. Cross & Associates, LLC	ccrossmph@gmail.com	96825
Debbie Cabebe, CEO	Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc. <a href="http://www.meoinc.org/">http://www.meoinc.org/</a>	debbie.cabebe@meoinc.org	96793
Cynthia Crabtree	CHW for Hawaii U Telehealth	<a href="mailto:ccrdabtr1@hawaii.edu">ccrdabtr1@hawaii.edu</a> /	96720

April 3, 2023

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



*Working together for Kapolei*

Tuesday, April 4, 2023, 10:30 a.m.  
Conference Rm. 211 and via Videoconference

**RE: HB 1408 HD3 RELATING TO DIGITAL EQUITY**

Dear Chair Dela Cruz, Vice Chair Keith-Agaran 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,

Kiran Polk  
Executive Director

**HB-1408-HD-3**

Submitted on: 4/1/2023 2:03:37 PM

Testimony for WAM on 4/4/2023 10:30:00 AM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dan Gardner	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Dela Cruz and Members of the Ways and Means Committee - I am asking for your support of this important legislation. Achieving digital equity is of great importance for all the citizens of Hawaii. It facilitates communications for all ages and is especially useful for our Kapuna. Telehealth is improving health care delivery and saving lives. It needs to be second nature for those with health challenges and is especially important for those with disabilities and limited mobility. It will reduce social isolation, a serious mental health issue. Greater digital equity will also help break down key economic barriers for those with lower incomes and limited access to the internet. Please support this initiative that will help so many. Thank you.

April 2, 2023

TO: Senator Donovan M. Dela Cruz, Chair  
Senator Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran, Vice Chair  
Committee on Ways and Means  
Hawaii State Legislature

RE: **HB1408 HD3 – Relating to Digital Equity**  
Hearing Scheduled : April 4, 2023 – 10:30 AM  
Hawaii State Capitol Building

Honorable Senators Dela Cruz, Chair; Keith-Agaran, Vice-Chair; and Members of the Committee:

**I support HB1408 HD3** – the legislation presented to you to appropriate funds for a Digital Equity Program to award grants to applicants to help fund and expand broadband capacity throughout the State of Hawaii.

We live in a digital age and need to support digital literacy. Your constituents rely on computers and need to have the skill to operate the software in many fields: education, health care, banking, commerce, news, weather alerts, etc. Unfortunately, not all citizens are able to access broadband in Hawaii to be as literate and well informed as they can be. This bill would help solve that problem.

Please support Digital Literacy for all Hawaii citizens and **support HB1408 HD3**.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this important issue.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Olah  
Resident, State of Hawaii