
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The Hawaii Revised Statutes is amended by
2 adding a new chapter to be appropriately designated and to read
3 as follows:

4 **"CHAPTER**

5 **HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE**

6 § -1 **Definitions.** As used in this chapter, unless the
7 context otherwise requires:

8 "Broadband" means high-speed internet access that is always
9 on, including mobile and fixed technologies.

10 "Department" means the department of business, economic
11 development, and tourism.

12 "Digital equity" means a condition in which all individuals
13 and communities have the information technology capacity needed
14 for full participation in our society, democracy, and economy.

15 "Office" means the Hawaii broadband and digital equity
16 office.

17 § -2 **Hawaii broadband and digital equity office;**
18 **establishment; state broadband coordinator.** (a) There is

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1 established the Hawaii broadband and digital equity office
2 within the department of business, economic development, and
3 tourism.

4 (b) The director of business, economic development, and
5 tourism shall appoint, exempt from chapter 76, a state broadband
6 coordinator to head the office.

7 **§ -3 Hawaii broadband and digital equity office; duties.**

8 In furtherance of the State's objectives and policies for the
9 economy pursuant to section 226-10.5, the office shall:

- 10 (1) Develop and implement specific strategies and plans to
11 aggressively increase broadband affordability,
12 penetration, and competitive availability in the
13 State;
- 14 (2) Support the efforts of both public and private
15 entities in Hawaii to enhance or facilitate the
16 deployment of and access to competitively priced,
17 advanced electronic communications services, including
18 broadband and its products and services and internet
19 access services of general application throughout
20 Hawaii;
- 21 (3) Promote the landing of trans-Pacific submarine cable,
22 including the development of a carrier neutral cable

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1 landing station and associated terrestrial
2 connectivity to reduce barriers to fiber landing in
3 Hawaii;

4 (4) Promote, advocate, and facilitate the implementation
5 of the findings and recommendations of the most
6 current Hawaii broadband strategic plan;

7 (5) Support the findings of the community-based Broadband
8 Hui as reflected in its digital equity declaration;

9 (6) Administer grant programs in support of broadband
10 infrastructure, innovation, and the digital economy;

11 (7) Actively seek out funding from private and public
12 sources in furtherance of the office's duties pursuant
13 to this chapter; and

14 (8) Provide a repository, aggregation point, and
15 governance framework for broadband mapping and digital
16 equity data from various sources including but not
17 limited to digital literacy, telehealth, distance
18 education, remote work, internet accessibility, and
19 service coverage to support mapping, reporting,
20 infrastructure deployment, and data-driven policy.

21 **§ -4 Broadband planning and coordination; cooperation.**

22 (a) The office shall:

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- 1 (1) Seek input and the widest possible cooperation from
2 public and private agencies and individuals to achieve
3 the purposes of this chapter;
- 4 (2) Work closely with and assist the counties in the
5 promotion of coordinated state and county broadband
6 planning;
- 7 (3) Encourage every state department, county agency, and
8 other public or private agencies and individuals
9 involved in broadband programs to participate in the
10 activities of the office and incorporate, to the
11 extent feasible, the ideas and suggestions of the
12 participants in the office's comprehensive planning
13 goals;
- 14 (4) Monitor the broadband-based development efforts of
15 other states and nations in areas such as business,
16 education, and health;
- 17 (5) Advise the department on other states' best practices
18 involving remote work promotion and policies and
19 strategies related to making affordable broadband
20 services available to every Hawaii home and business;
- 21 (6) Monitor broadband-related activities at the federal
22 level;

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1 (7) Encourage public-private partnerships to increase the
2 deployment and adoption of broadband services and
3 applications;

4 (8) Monitor regulatory and policy changes for potential
5 impact on broadband deployment and sustainability in
6 Hawaii; and

7 (9) Advise the director of business, economic development,
8 and tourism on broadband deployment."

9 SECTION 2. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

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INTRODUCED BY: 

BY REQUEST

JAN 25 2021

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Report Title:

Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office

Description:

Establishes the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

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JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Business, Economic Development, and Tourism

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO THE HAWAII BROADBAND AND DIGITAL EQUITY OFFICE.

PURPOSE: Establish the Hawaii Broadband and Digital Equity Office within the Department of Business, Economic Development, and Tourism.

MEANS: Add a new chapter to the Hawaii Revised Statutes.

JUSTIFICATION: Hawaii was not prepared for the first stay-at-home, work-from-home orders triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. From day one, local government, businesses, educators, and residents felt Hawaii's vulnerability due to the inadequacy of digital infrastructure that we had otherwise taken for granted. Broadband and its related facets of access, literacy, applications like telehealth, remote work and distance learning, and the economy became among the State's most pressing challenges. This bill establishes a State focus on broadband and digital equity and accesses various funding sources, including federal programs, to build broadband infrastructure and implement digital equity programs.

Impact on the public: It is widely recognized that building robust broadband infrastructure and eliminating digital inequity benefit all Hawaii residents. This is the foundation upon which Hawaii can survive and thrive in the twenty-first century digital economy.

Impact on the department and other agencies: Minimal.

GENERAL FUND: None.

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OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM
DESIGNATION: BED-142.

OTHER AFFECTED
AGENCIES: None.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon approval.