February 24, 2006

TO: The Honorable Mark Recktenwald, Director  
Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs

FROM: Patricia Hamamoto, Superintendent

SUBJECT: Public, Education and Government Access Comments

The Department of Education is pleased to have this opportunity to provide our comments as well as the following collective response to your ongoing public meetings relating to potential changes in statewide Public, Education and Government (PEG) cable access services.

In education partners are vital to effectively educate both the youth as well as the life-long learners of our state. We cannot do it alone. Within educational access such a collaboration has been ongoing for many years. This collaboration has included not only the institutional education partners, namely the University of Hawaii, the Department of Education, and the Hawaii Independent Schools, but also a strong working partnership with ‘Olelo for Community Television. Since our agreement was forged in 1999, ‘Olelo has been supportive of the position of accredited education, both public and private education, and we value their support.

As we have stated in the past, cable television and the accompanying distance learning technologies greatly assist the Hawaii Department of Education (HDOE) in providing classroom and professional development opportunities statewide to our students, faculty and staff as well as others interested in the subject matter.

Since 1999 we have engaged in constructive discussions and planning relating to educational access cable. The HDOE is encouraged that regular and consistent investments in educational access cable on Oahu have greatly enhanced and expanded the social and economic vitality of the State and its people. We believe that the existing franchise orders and agreements are extremely important to accredited educational institutions in the State of Hawaii and our ability to serve some 300,000 statewide.
The Honorable Mark Recktenwald, Director  
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However, should the existing franchise orders be changed, we recommend the attached unified crafted position. This would allow a co-existence of the educational partners and an opportunity to continue and fulfill our mission to our constituents. The Department of Education ardently supports the position outlined in this statement and we ask that you give it your kind consideration. Our collective point-of-contact is David Lassner, Chief Information Officer for the University of Hawaii system, who can be reached at 956-3501 or david@hawaii.edu.

PH:GH:et

Attachment

c: Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support  
Board of Education
February 22, 2006

Mr. Mark Recktenwald, Director  
Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs  
335 Merchant Street, Room 101  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

Dear Director Recktenwald:

The Hawaii Association of Independent Schools would like to submit the following response to your request for public comment relating to Public, Education and Government (PEG) cable access services in the State of Hawaii.

Since 1999 HAIS has collaborated with the Hawaii Department of Education and the University of Hawaii on issues relating to Educational Access (EA) cable. Through this Educational Access partnership we believe that our track record documents that the existing cable franchise orders and subsequent agreements have emerged as an extremely important to accredited educational institutions.

These regular and consistent investments in Educational Access cable on Oahu have greatly enhanced and expanded EA's ability to serve some 300,000 students, faculty and staff statewide who are involved annually in education.

Noting the importance of the issue our organizations have collaborated to develop the attached shared vision of Educational Access for accredited education in Hawaii. HAIS strongly supports the position as outlined in this statement.

Thank you for providing for this opportunity to provide our comments. Please contact me at 973-1535 or via email at robert@hais.org should you have any questions for me. Otherwise, EA's common point-of-contact is David Lassner, Chief Information Officer for the University of Hawaii system, who can be reached at 956-3501 or david@hawaii.edu.

Sincerely,

Robert M. Witt  
Executive Director

Enclosure
Mr. Mark E. Recktenwald, Director  
Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs  
335 Merchant Street, Room 101  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Mr. Recktenwald:

On behalf of our ten campuses and five education centers on six islands, the University of Hawai‘i submits the following response to your request for public comment on statewide Public, Education and Government (PEG) cable access services.

For many years representatives from the Hawai‘i Department of Education, the University of Hawai‘i and the Hawai‘i Association of Independent Schools have engaged in constructive discussions and planning relating to Educational Access (EA) cable. The existing franchise orders and agreements have proven to be critical to our collective ability to serve some 300,000 students, faculty and staff statewide.

Distance learning technologies greatly assist in providing life-long learning opportunities to a growing number of citizens of our State, and more importantly, in providing educational access to those who can not or will not cross the threshold of our island schools and campuses.

The University of Hawai‘i is encouraged and proud that regular and consistent investment in Educational Access cable on Oahu has greatly enhanced the social and economic vitality of the people of Hawai‘i.

On behalf of accredited education in Hawai‘i, our organizations have collaborated to develop a shared vision of Educational Access for accredited education in Hawai‘i. The University of Hawai‘i strongly supports the position outlined in the attached statement. Our point-of-contact is David Lassner, Chief Information Officer for the University of Hawai‘i System, who can be reached at 956-3501 or <david@hawaii.edu>.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

David McClain

Attachment

C: David Lassner, UHS Chief Information Officer
Hawaii’s accredited education providers conveyed our unified view on Educational Access as part of the DCCA’s PEG Access Plan hearings held during the Fall of 2003. Our comments on the current DCCA RFP process echo our shared position as expressed at that time.

Educational institutions on all islands have played fundamental roles in the development of access programming throughout the State. Since 1999, the University of Hawaii (UH), the Hawaii Department of Education (HDOE) and Hawaii Association of Independent Schools (HAIS) have worked together to build and leverage the Educational ("E") aspect of Public, Education and Government (PEG) services provided for the people of all islands. These three organizations encompass the majority of public and private education in the State of Hawaii.

Accredited education proudly points to our successes in serving the community through cable television. On Oahu alone the UH, DOE and HAIS provides for more than 15,000 hours of educational programming annually on the two cable channels available to us. This includes a diversity of programming ranging from credit courses for students to teacher education to consumer education for seniors to informational programming for the community. And all this programming is made available to all islands using Education’s interisland transmission systems.

The partners in accredited education throughout the State ask that DCCA take this opportunity to ensure a continued set-aside of channel capacity for educational access and a continued set-aside of financial resources to support the provision of educational services to our citizenry on all islands.

Through years of difficult and painful experience we know the tensions that can be unleashed as passionate advocates for Public ("P") access promote the allocation of resources for the P portion of PEG. Our mission as educators is to provide educational services to the people of Hawaii. We have demonstrated our commitment and success since the beginnings of cable access in Hawaii, and we ask that DCCA implement a set-aside to ensure that we can continue to do so. This set-aside should ensure:

1) The continued assignment of Channel 55 and 56 as dedicated statewide channels for educational access programming from Hawaii’s accredited educational institutions. This must also include high-quality transmission capability from educational origination facilities into the cable networks.

2) The continued allocation to accredited education of a fixed portion of the cable franchise fees allocated for PEG to fairly support the "E" component of PEG. At a minimum, this should be at least equal to the E funding levels currently established through previous and painful negotiation.

We firmly believe that Educational Access broadly adds value for the people of Hawaii and that a firm set-aside of resources as requested will best ensure the continuation of our statewide services to the people of all islands and a holistic P, E and G program.