



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

Testimony Presented Before the
House Committee on Consumer Protection and Commerce
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By

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HB 2397 HD1 – RELATING TO BROADBAND

Chair Johanson, Vice Chair Kitagawa and members of the committee:

The University of Hawai'i, representing the State's broadband interests, provides the following comments on HB 2397 HD1.

HB 2397 HD1 creates a state broadband infrastructure authority, and provides for clarification of the role of the state broadband office within DBEDT to focus on critical elements of digital equity and literacy necessary to maximize benefits of investment in broadband infrastructure. Creation of a state broadband infrastructure authority, administratively attached to DCCA, might provide a useful vehicle for the ownership and governance of the assets and facilities to be constructed and acquired with the anticipated influx of public funds. It appears that the authority would need to rely on revenue resulting from the collection of managed assets in order to support its staffing and operations, that would otherwise be needed to support ongoing maintenance and operations of those assets. The rules and processes to support the expected Federal formula and competitive funds remain unclear, and are likely to be issued over the second half of calendar 2022.

Planning for the ideal use of the expected Federal funds is underway, and we expect that we will align projects and outcomes with those funds as the programs controlling the funds issue rules and create the mechanisms to expend the funds. Part of the planning effort is to address the governance and sustainability of the efforts to be implemented; we expect to be able to provide specific inputs and recommendations once the rules are clear and plans come together later this year. Financial sustainability of the investments is critical to ensure sufficient support of operations, maintenance and the eventual renewal of critical broadband assets.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on HB 2397 HD1.