



# **UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM**

## **Legislative Testimony**

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Testimony Presented Before the  
Senate Committee on Commerce and Consumer Protection  
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By  
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### **SB 1161, SD1 – RELATING TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

Chair Baker, Vice Chair Taniguchi and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of SB 1161, SD1.

During the work of the Hawai'i Broadband Task Force and the subsequent Act 199 working group, it became clear that there are many obstacles to the implementation of advanced broadband services in the State of Hawai'i. One of these obstacles is the time-consuming process associated with obtaining the right to use utility poles and the cost of pole replacements and upgrades.

The University of Hawai'i was fortunate to be awarded over \$36 million in federal stimulus funds to provide direct fiber optic connectivity to every public school, every public library and every public higher education campus and education center in the State. Based on initial assessments, we are concerned that in some rural and remote areas it may not be feasible to meet the requirements of the current bill to qualify for the exemption from pole replacement or upgrade.

We therefore request that Section 3 of SB 1161, SD1 include an additional provision to exempt publicly-funded telecommunications infrastructure projects from any applicable requirements to replace or upgrade poles, provided that all feasible alternatives to reduce overall impact are first considered and that if the exemption is required, that the project proceed in a manner that achieves its public purpose with the least-feasible impact on the existing poles.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony and our request to ensure that we can provide direct fiber optic connectivity to Hawai'i's educational anchor institutions, including in our most rural and remote areas, with the stimulus funds awarded by the federal government.