

## U.S. SENATOR MAZIE K. HIRONO INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT

### Connectivity – Helping Connect to Reliable High-Speed Internet

#### Connectivity

We need broadband internet to do our jobs, to participate in school, to connect with our health care providers, and to stay connected with family and friends. Yet, 1 in 50 Hawaii residents live in areas where there is no broadband infrastructure, and 12% of Hawaii households do not have an internet subscription.

- ✓ Authorizes \$42.5 billion for a Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program to provide grants to increase connectivity to underserved and high-cost areas.
- ✓ Hawaii will receive a minimum of \$100 million to provide broadband access across the state.
- ✓ This will provide at least 33,000 Hawaii residents with high-speed internet access.

#### Digital Equity

For too long, there has been a digital divide in this country, which was laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have heard countless stories of working families who lacked the internet service, connected devices, and digital skills necessary for them and their children to participate in the new remote environment. This has to change.

- ✓ Establishes new programs to increase “digital equity” to ensure communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in society and the economy.
- ✓ Creates of the State Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program and authorizes:
  - \$60 million for grants to state to develop digital equity plans.
  - \$1.44 billion over five years for states to implement these plans.
- ✓ Authorizes \$1.25 billion over five years for a Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program to support state, local, and tribal governments.

#### Internet Affordability

In Hawaii, 44% of residents live in an area where there is only one broadband internet provider that provides adequate service. In many instances, broadband is just too expensive to be within reach for many.

- ✓ Directs the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to issue rules to extend the emergency broadband benefit program, which subsidizes internet service for low-income Americans.