

Resolution

No. 25-232

URGING THE HAWAII STATE LEGISLATURE TO ENSURE THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY AND FUNDING OF PUBLIC, EDUCATIONAL, AND GOVERNMENTAL ACCESS MEDIA IN HAWAII

WHEREAS, Hawai'i's four Public, Educational, and Governmental (PEG) television stations — 'Ōlelo Community Media on O'ahu, Akakū Maui Community Media, Nā Leo TV on Hawai'i Island, and Hō'ike Kaua'i Community Television — were established to advance public access to media and communication, empower residents to tell their own stories, and strengthen community participation in civic life; and

WHEREAS, Hawai'i's PEG TV stations are funded through franchise and access fees paid by cable subscribers, which are reinvested into free media training, equipment, and facilities that enable individuals, schools, and organizations to produce noncommercial programs that inform, educate, and engage the public; and

WHEREAS, these stations serve as essential public services by providing platforms for community news, local government transparency, educational programming, cultural preservation, and emergency communication during times of crisis; and

WHEREAS, the State Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, which regulates cable franchises, has extended supplemental PEG Access operating agreements only through June 30, 2026, creating uncertainty regarding the long-term viability of community access media in Hawai'i; and

WHEREAS, DCCA has signaled its intent to significantly reduce Access Operating Funds for PEG providers, as demonstrated in Decision & Order 386 for Kaua'i County, which approved Charter Communications' franchise renewal and reduced PEG funding under Federal Communications Commission Rule 621; and

WHEREAS, DCCA has also initiated franchise renewal proceedings for Maui County using outdated and incomplete data from 2013, with a similar intent to reduce PEG Access funding, and has indicated future reductions for Nā Leo TV and 'Ōlelo Community Media; and

Resolution No. 25-232

WHEREAS, such reductions would severely impair the PEGs' capacity to fulfill their core mission of providing equitable access to media tools, education, and civic information across all islands, particularly as these organizations actively strengthen Hawai'i's creative industries by supporting youth and residents through workforce development initiatives, film challenges, and professional training in media production and storytelling; and

WHEREAS, Charter Communications and Cox Communications have announced a proposed merger expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2026, subject to approval by DCCA, which presents a critical opportunity for the State to negotiate community-benefiting franchise conditions; and

WHEREAS, former DCCA Director Keali'i Lopez publicly acknowledged that the State failed to leverage prior merger negotiations to secure stronger terms, such as high-definition channels for PEGs to better serve the public interest; and

WHEREAS, this upcoming merger provides a timely and necessary opportunity for the State of Hawai'i and all four counties to assert their authority to ensure PEG Access sustainability, equity, and modernization; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it urges the Hawai'i State Legislature to ensure the long-term sustainability and funding of Public, Educational, and Governmental Access media in Hawai'i;
2. That it urges the Governor and the State Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs to condition approval of the Charter/Cox merger on contractual commitments to restore full PEG funding, eliminate deductions under FCC Rule 621, and ensure equitable, county-specific franchise terms that reflect Hawai'i's unique cultural and geographic diversity; and
3. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to Nadine Ando, Director, Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, State of Hawai'i; Dean Hazama, Deputy Director, Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs, State of Hawai'i; Randy Leong, Administrator, Cable Television

Resolution No. 25-232

Division, State of Hawai'i; Maui County's delegation to the Hawai'i State Legislature; the Honorable Josh Green, Governor, M.D.; the Honorable Dr. Holeka Goro Inaba, Council Chair, County of Hawai'i; the Honorable Mel Rapozo, Council Chair, County of Kaua'i; the Honorable Tommy Waters, Council Chair, City and County of Honolulu; the Honorable Alice L. Lee, Council Chair, County of Maui; the Honorable Kimo Alameda, Mayor, County of Hawai'i; the Honorable Derek Kawakami, Mayor, County of Kaua'i; the Honorable Rick Blangiardi, Mayor, City and County of Honolulu; and the Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor, County of Maui.

paf:kjh:25-338a

INTRODUCED BY:

Tamara A.M. Paltin

TAMARA PALTIN