

Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs' ("DCCA") Draft Plan for Public, Education, and Government ("PEG") Access

Executive Summary

DCCA's draft plan for PEG access is attached. DCCA developed the plan after conducting a series of public meetings statewide, and after receiving input from over a hundred concerned citizens. DCCA is releasing the plan in draft form in order to give the public a further opportunity to comment. After DCCA reviews those comments, it will make any appropriate revisions and release the final plan.

The draft plan is intended to build on the strengths of the PEG access system in Hawaii, while addressing needs that were identified during the public meeting process. Some of the more significant aspects of the plan include:

- 1) **Home Rule for PEGs at the Option of the Counties.** Each county will have the opportunity to oversee PEG access in that county, in order to allow them to develop PEG policies that best suit their unique needs. Counties that exercise this option will receive funding from DCCA to help defray their administrative costs. If a county declines to exercise the option, DCCA will continue to oversee the operation of the PEG in that county. In either case, regulation of cable operators will remain with DCCA.
- 2) **Additional Support for Underserved Areas.** DCCA's public comment process identified substantial unmet needs for PEG access services in certain areas of the state. In order to provide additional funding to those areas, DCCA will propose reallocating some of the cable fees that currently support DCCA's cable regulatory program.
- 3) **Broader Participation in PEG Governance.** DCCA's public comment process identified a need for broader representation on PEG boards of directors. Accordingly, for those PEGs overseen by DCCA, the plan provides that one member of each PEG board will be selected by an election process involving the active producers and users of the PEG.
- 4) **Cable Advisory Committee.** The plan recommends that the Governor appoint members to the cable advisory committee, which has been inactive for a number of years. The Committee will include representatives from the counties, and will provide DCCA with input on its PEG policies including the provision of additional funding to underserved areas.
- 5) **Ensuring Openness and Accountability in PEG Operations.** All PEGs overseen by DCCA will be required to adopt bylaws and policies consistent with the requirements of Hawaii's public meetings and open records laws. Additionally, all PEGs will be subject to periodic reviews by independent third parties to ensure that they are expending funds appropriately and complying with applicable contractual requirements.

Comments on the draft plan may be submitted in writing or by email, and should be submitted by Wednesday, December 10, 2003. Email comments should be addressed to cabletv@dca.hawaii.gov. Written comments should be addressed to:

Cable Television Division
Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs
State of Hawaii
335 Merchant Street, Room 101
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

For further information, contact DCCA's Cable Television Division at 586-2620.