

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: No fiscal impact

Action:	Do Pass as Amended and Be Printed Engrossed
Vote:	5 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	George G., Kruse, Monnes Anderson, Verger, Morrisette
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	Ilana Weinbaum, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	1/24, 2/21

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Alters the definition of “low income customers” as it relates to eligibility for the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program to include residents of long term care facilities or residential care facilities who receive Medicaid and whose income does not exceed 135 percent of the federal poverty level.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Guidelines used to calculate income
- Services provided by the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program
- Number of individuals living in residential care facilities
- Other telecommunication assistance programs

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: Eliminates the word “annual” in reference to level of income used to determine eligibility for the program.

BACKGROUND: Oregonians whose income is at or below the current federal poverty level and are on a state public assistance program may receive a reduction in their monthly bill for local residential telephone service through the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP). OTAP is one of the three telecommunication assistance programs under The Residential Service Protection Fund, which was enacted during the 1987 legislative session to assure that adequate, affordable residential telecommunication service is available to all citizens of Oregon.

OTAP currently provides telephone subsidies to approximately 60,000 low-income Oregonians who receive food stamp benefits or benefits from low income public assistance programs for which eligibility requirements do not exceed 135 percent of federal poverty level. The program currently provides a maximum of \$13.50 per month for basic telephone service. The state pays \$3.50 per line for those who qualify for the program and the Federal Communications Commission either waives the remaining cost or reimburses the phone company.