



OREGON ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS

24 February 2015

Chair Diane Rosenbaum
Senate Committee on Rules
Oregon State Legislature

Re: SB 294

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments on SB 294. We recognize the importance of the Oregon Government Ethics Commission's (OGEC) work on defining representatives of the news media for the purposes of access to executive sessions, however we have not taken a position on the bill, as introduced. We are grateful that OGEC has included us in the interim workgroup discussions and we ask to be involved in future discussions regarding this issue.

In the event that legislators weigh in on the definition of media, we wish to note the importance of traditional news media representatives versus the non-traditional news gatherers.

The primary purpose, responsibility, and obligation of the stations – per their Federal Communications Commission (FCC) license – is to serve and address the “interests of their communities”, such as covering and disseminating news of importance to their viewers and listeners. It goes without saying the management of the OAB member stations takes this responsibility very seriously and looks forward to working with the OGEC in their efforts to clearly define “representatives of the news media”.

One point that should be made very clear is that the traditional news media – Television and Radio Reporters / Representatives – have a great degree of accuracy, oversight, and consequences attached to their news gathering, while the non-traditional media do not.

We ask that the broadcasters have a seat at the table when the definition of representative of news media is discussed, whether it is with a legislative workgroup or an OEGC workgroup. We look forward to this work, but we must emphasize that any effort to define



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these media should not in any way result in our traditional broadcasters having limited access to public agency executive sessions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bill Johnstone
President & CEO
Oregon Association of Broadcasters

The Oregon Association of Broadcasters (OAB) is a member supported trade association representing over 200 free over-the-air commercial radio and television stations in Oregon.