



Columbia Gorge
EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

400 East Scenic Drive, Suite 207
The Dalles, Oregon 97058
(541) 298-5155
Fax (541) 296-2965
www.cgesd.k12.or.us

February 4, 2018

House Committee on Economic Development and Trade
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE, Salem Oregon 97301

Re: E-Rate Match Fund Bill Hearing – Support

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express the importance of the state match program and to convey the positive impact it has had on school districts in our ESD's region.

Obtaining adequate bandwidth and reliable connectivity to the internet is a significant challenge for rural school districts. Often they are limited to inadequate and old technologies such as T1 lines. Microwave transport can be used when geography doesn't interfere with signal strength, but this technology offers reduced reliability.

Fiber optic networks present districts with a reliable, upgradeable, cost-effective, and high-speed method of accessing the internet. The state match program has allowed our internet access consortium at Columbia Gorge ESD to build fiber to three rural school districts which were previously on old or unreliable bandwidth delivery platforms. The state match offered us an opportunity to build fiber for all three districts simultaneously, because the fiscal impact of doing so was reduced to a manageable level. Without the state match we would have had to fund approximately 20% of the fiber build costs. Our capacity to build fiber last year would have been reduced to only one school district. The E-Rate state match opportunity accelerates upgrades for schools lacking fiber. This ultimately results in increased learning opportunities for students and gives them access to programs that are only accessible to districts with sufficient bandwidth.

On behalf of Columbia Gorge ESD, Dufur School District, South Wasco County School District, and Sherman County School District we would like to express our gratitude and support for the state match program.

Sincerely,

Cody Harmon

Cody Harmon
Director of Information Technology
Columbia Gorge Education Service District
400 E Scenic Dr. STE 207
The Dalles, OR 97058
Charmon@cgesd.k12.or.us