

SB 505 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Business and General Government

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/7

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Requires Oregon Broadband Advisory Council (OBAC) to study issues related to broadband capacity and access in this state, including public-private partnerships for broadband projects. Requires OBAC, based on results of study, to establish statewide broadband plan and submit report to interim committee of Legislative Assembly before September 15, 2020. Allows OBAC to submit proposals for legislation based on results of study to 2021 session of the Legislative Assembly. Appropriates \$25 million for grants through Rural Broadband Capacity Pilot Program for broadband infrastructure projects in rural areas of state that lack adequate broadband access. Extends sunset of OBAC from January 2, 2020, to January 2, 2022. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Broadband Advisory Council (OBAC) was established in 2009 to encourage the development of statewide broadband access. According to the November 1, 2018, report from the OBAC, low-density, high-cost rural areas of the state are expensive to upgrade and serve, and fiber optic placement is the primary cost. The report notes that equipment and alternative technologies tailored to rural connectivity are emerging, and agriculture will become the largest driver for broadband infrastructure deployment in rural areas of the state.

Senate Bill 505 appropriates \$25 million for grants to be made through the Rural Broadband Capacity Pilot Program. The measure also directs the OBAC to provide a statewide broadband plan to the legislature by September 15, 2020. The measure extends the sunset of the OBAC to January 2, 2022.