

February 10, 2019

Wade Holmes
455 NW Delaware Ave
Bend, OR 97703

Re: Public Hearing for House Bill 2173 and HB 2184, February 11, 2019

Chair Jones and members of the committee,

My name is Wade Holmes and I am from Bend, Oregon. I have dedicated my career to building and supporting broadband in Oregon. It began in late 90's with the first DSL loops serving schools and libraries in Eastern Oregon with Oregon Trail Internet and developed into pioneering infrastructure builds in Central Oregon with BendBroadband. My dedication is both public and private.

Today my career continues in broadband analysis where I lead a data science team to forecast demand, network capacity, optimized construction and customer experience on broadband networks for TDS Telecom – a national multi-service operator providing service in Oregon.

My experience spans direct engineering, operations and executive leadership – in cable, wireline, fiber-to-the-premise and fixed-mobile broadband. I am Oregon born, an OSU graduate in Computer Science and University of Oregon MBA. I deeply care about Oregon's future. I am also a governor appointed member of the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for House Bills 2184 and 2173.

Oregon as you know is exceptionally diverse. Both in landscape and population density. Different technologies are required to meet Oregon's long-term needs given this diversity. Those technologies are changing – both in the way they are installed and the way they are operated.

- In urban areas we have been effective at providing capacity intra-region, but we must be keenly aware of how quickly demand and technology shifts. Today the State lacks a body to work with public and private entities to forecast demand independent of strategy, evaluate congestion and infrastructure risks, and to recommend public policy to promote appropriate investment. This is especially important when it is not economically a priority today. I support HB 2173 to establish this capability in Oregon for proactive broadband public policy.
- In rural and hyper-rural areas of Oregon we have a material gap. Not only do we lack the backhaul for operators to be able to afford last-mile network construction, we lack the framework to provide them a pathway to build the necessary backhaul. The smallest communities in Oregon could have fiber, the backbone for wired or wireless service, if there was an affordable network out of town to attach it to. Broadband is essential infrastructure and with the right planning and understanding that infrastructure can be built. Repurposing the Universal Service Fund to aid in the development of broadband backhaul is appropriate for Oregon. I support HB 2184 to repurpose USF to support high cost backhaul construction and access in rural Oregon.
- Cherry picking, whereby broadband networks are built to those with the resources to commit in advance to premium services – or meet a construction threshold – normally about \$1500/unit,

have the potential to build an irreconcilable digital divide. One where winner-takes-all entrants leave unserved gaps in the high cost areas of a community. It is important that early action and policy be established to support cost per household construction in those areas. Again, proactive public policy is essential and once certain divides form they become an economic chasm.

- The creation and funding of a Broadband Office and repurposing the Universal Service Fund are both recommended by the Oregon Broadband Advisory council in the 2018 report to the legislature.

I see a bright future for Oregon's broadband landscape. Whether trenching fiber in solid basalt or connecting sensors on rural farms with next-generation wireless – SB 2173 and SB 2184 provide a framework to be proactive with policy and support opportunity gaps that must be filled to promote responsible investment.

Sincerely,

Wade Holmes