



February 11, 2019
Economic Development Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2173 – Creates Oregon Broadband Office within Oregon Business Development Department and HB 2184 – Expanding the Universal Service Fund

ORHA supports HB 2173 and the creation of the Oregon Broadband Office, as well as HB 2184 which would create the necessary funding to bring broadband to areas in rural Oregon that don't currently have access. As Oregon looks at its critical infrastructure needs, broadband must be included. The development and maintenance of broadband in Oregon is essential to providing access to education and health care in our rural communities.

More and more, rural hospitals and clinics are relying on high-speed internet access to bridge the urban-rural gap and provide their patients with services that are often found only in much larger cities. At a time when the health care workforce continues to tighten, access to this type of health care delivery is essential for our rural communities.

Healthcare is only one piece of the important broadband infrastructure. Broadband can expand the educational opportunities to rural youth and help support economic development in our rural communities. The success of our rural communities depends on access to information.