

January 31, 2020

House Committee on Revenue  
Oregon State Capitol  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Support for HB 4079 – Rural Telecommunications Investment Act**

Dear Chair Nathanson and Members of the House Revenue Committee:

The City of Cornelius strongly supports HB 4079 which would expand the Oregon Universal Service Fund (OUSF) to include cell phone users in the fee pool. This bill will generate additional funds needed to establish a sustainably funded broadband grant program within the new State Broadband Office.

Though Cornelius is in western Washington County, we have rural segments of our own county that are not well served to provide quality broadband services. Currently, there is a very real and widening digital divide in Oregon. Communities, primarily in rural areas, are without broadband access. As technology rapidly progresses, they are at risk at being continually left behind.

The passage of HB 4079 will:

- Help communities leverage federal funds. Some federal programs require up to a 10% state match to access federal dollars. The Broadband Fund will be one potential source for the match.
- Prioritize schools and libraries that serve as anchor institutions and bring connectivity to a community. Once broadband has been brought to a place, it is easier to build upon the network. *All schools and libraries in Oregon should have equal access to broadband.*
- Allows school children growing up in smaller rural communities to have the same opportunity in school as those in larger urban areas.
- Create a critical piece of infrastructure for Oregon's small businesses who are becoming more dependent on technology to be competitive.
- Provide a critical healthcare link for people and families who are not close to health services.

We are fortunate in the valley to have access to broadband and the competitive world access it provides. Broadband is a vital component for economic development, education and health. We support providing access to broadband in other parts of Oregon!

Sincerely,



Rob Drake  
City Manager