



February 4, 2020

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

Subject: City of Eugene Support of HB 4079, Rural Telecommunications Investment Act

Dear Chair Nathanson and Members of the House Revenue Committee,

The City of Eugene has telecommunications policies regarding endorsing and advocating for programs in which residents, businesses, and public institutions can have access to a full range of advanced telecommunications services at reasonable, affordable rates.

The City is supportive of the Oregon Public Utilities Program and the proposed planning and coordination activities of the Oregon Business Development Department. HB 4079 is aimed at promoting broadband deployment and use in rural areas of Oregon.

Urban areas like Eugene want our rural partners to benefit from enhanced broadband services. This rural/urban collaboration is fully in action as Eugene and Lane County are working together to deliver high speed fiber service from a new improved 'Middle-Mile' peering point included in the Eugene Fiber Project.

- **HB 4079** brings wireless service providers into a fair and equitable OPUC fee structure that benefits the wireless industry. The new revenue will support a grant program housed in the Oregon Broadband Office to invest in infrastructure needs in communities who are part of the digital divide.
- **HB 4079** will fill a critical infrastructure gap for Oregon's small businesses which are becoming more dependent on technology to be globally competitive.
- **HB 4079** provides a critical healthcare link for people and families who are not close to health services.
- **HB 4079** will enable Oregon to participate in national rural broadband funding opportunities because it would be able to contribute the 10% match. As an urban partner of the Regional Fiber Consortium (www.connectingoregon.org), Eugene has seen first-hand rural fiber expansion occur because of funding allocated by the federal NTIA.

Urban jurisdictions such as Eugene endorse proposals such as this because they ensure that our rural partner agencies and jurisdictions have the tools and services they need to serve their residents and

businesses, especially to mitigate rural flight to urban areas. Our rural partners want to develop broadband innovation districts to recruit and retain tech businesses to their areas, as well as enhancing their education anchor institutions and library systems.

The League of Oregon Cities estimates that 400,000 residents and businesses are without Internet Access service in Oregon. The priority for spending this additional revenue will be on the 52 libraries and 25 school districts without high speed internet.

Broadband is also a vital component for economic development, education and the delivery of health services. Please help close this digital divide and support HB 4079.

Sincerely,

submitted electronically

Pam Berrian
Telecommunications Program Manager