

HB 2507 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY
Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Carrier: Sen. Riley

Action Date: 04/27/21
Action: Do pass.
Vote: 5-0-0-0
Yeas: 5 - Boquist, Burdick, Findley, Riley, Wagner
Fiscal: No fiscal impact
Revenue: No revenue impact
Prepared By: Jaime McGovern, Economist
Meeting Dates: 4/15, 4/27

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Decouples Oregon Telephone Assistance Program from funding offered by Federal Communications Commission (FCC), allowing the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP) to continue assisting low income voice customers. Extends sunset applicable to Oregon Telephone Assistance Program to 2030.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Administration of the program by the Public Utility Commission.
- Telephone customers assisted by the program.
- Effect of Pandemic on affordability of telecommunication services.
- Changes to the Federal Lifeline Program.

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Currently, the Federal Lifeline Program and Oregon Telephone Assistance Program both provide stackable financial assistance to low income communications customers. The Federal government plans to phase out assistance to wireline voice customers, and only continue broadband assistance. Oregon currently aligns with the Federal Program, and may also be required to phase out voice support under current statute. The Oregon Telephone Assistance Program allows one support per household, either broadband or voice, for households under 135% of the Federal poverty line.