

**Testimony to the House Committee on Business & Labor
House Bill 2698**

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Founded in 1968, the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, membership-based organization. We advance innovative, collaborative and equitable solutions to Oregon's environmental challenges for today and future generations.

Oregon Environmental Council is a nonpartisan, environmental nonprofit that works at the nexus of human health and the environment. We support HB 2698 – which would require manufacturers and companies to make the diagnostic tools, schematics, replacement parts and tools available to the user or a third party available at a fair price to repair electronic equipment.

HB 2698 would allow us to better “reduce, reuse, and recycle” our technology to limit the waste going into our environment. Currently, manufacturers of everyday household items like vacuums, toasters, and smart phones use their power in the marketplace to make things harder to repair, and thereby force consumers to buy new products, rather than fixing or reusing their items. Some companies design products without the parts necessary to fix a component, such as vacuum cleaners, or they make repair proprietary so that only the manufacturing company can do the repairs.

Electronic waste or e-waste is difficult to recycle, toxic to human health and the environment, and contains non-renewable rare earth minerals that are being mined at an unsustainable rate. For example, it is estimated that Americans purchase 161 million new smart phones a year (an iPhone 6 requires 295lbs of raw minerals).^{1,2} As such, e-waste is the fastest growing waste stream in the world.³ Giving Oregonians the access to be able to repair parts and electronics that can be easily fixed is critical to waste prevention, reducing the demand for natural resources, and furthering equity amongst lower and moderate-income families.

The COVID-19 pandemic showed us that not everyone can afford to purchase new laptops or phones on a whim. Estimates in May show that students in Oregon were short 75,000 laptops for distance learning. Repairing and refurbishing technology rather than requiring new purchases can increase inventories, create local economic opportunity, support local business, and keep parts and electronics more affordable for everyone.

We urge the House Committee on Business & Labor to support HB 2698.

¹ <https://uspirg.org/feature/usp/fix>.

² <https://www.vice.com/en/article/433wyq/everything-thats-inside-your-iphone>.

³ <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/02/how-do-we-tackle-the-fastest-growing-waste-stream-on-the-planet/>.