



Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

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**Testimony of Samuel Pastrick
Regarding HB 3256
Before the House Committee on Economic Recovery & Prosperity**

Chair Lively, Vice Chairs Cate and Kropf, members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Samuel Pastrick. I'm the Advocacy Manager at Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB). CUB is a membership-based 501(c)3 nonprofit consumer advocacy organization that represents the broad interests of residential energy and telecommunications utility customers. **I am pleased to submit this testimony in support of HB 3256 with both the -1 and -2 amendments, and encourage the Committee's swift movement toward passage.**

The -1 amendment compels the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) to open a timely investigation into the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program - also known as "Oregon Lifeline" - for the purpose of expanding and increasing the program to ensure that all Oregonians have affordable access to broadband and other telecommunications services. To achieve a robust and complete investigation, the -1 amendment further instructs the PUC to collaborate with the Oregon Broadband Office, the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council, and the Oregon Telephone Assistance Advisory Committee. Appropriately, the PUC's investigation will emphasize barriers faced by customers, including access to necessary technology and related services, as well as potential regulatory hurdles that may impact the PUC's ability to administer the program.

The -2 amendment extends the same potential opportunity to Oregon libraries for certain federal broadband support dollars that is currently available to Oregon schools. The federal "E-Rate" grant program requires a 10 percent match from individual states in order to access a 90 percent grant to support eligible broadband projects. Oregon has already established this opportunity to supply a 10 percent match for public schools. The -2 amendment replicates this opportunity for eligible libraries and would utilize a similar administrative process.

In summary, both the -1 and -2 amendments for HB 3256 reflect prudent and time sensitive public policy. CUB encourages the Committee's full support.

Respectfully,
Samuel Pastrick / samuel@oregoncub.org