



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

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DATE: February 4, 2021

TO: House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity

FROM: Lindsay Baker, Assistant Director of Government and External Relations
Oregon Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: House Bill 2411 (-2) – Underground Infrastructure Installation

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 2411 (-2) establishes a process by which the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and the Oregon Broadband Office within the Oregon Business Development Department (Business Oregon), will notify telecommunications providers of potential projects that may be appropriate for the installation of broadband conduit.

DISCUSSION

ODOT strives to provide a safe and reliable multimodal transportation system that connects people and helps Oregon's communities and economy thrive. As members of the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council, ODOT knows firsthand the critical nature of expanding broadband service throughout Oregon. Broadband expansion benefits the future of the transportation system, and the future of Oregonians.

In the regular course of ODOT's work, projects open longitudinal trenches spanning varying lengths along the roadway. When these trenches are open for transportation project purposes, the opportunity for broadband conduit to be installed may exist. HB 2411 (-2) creates a new coordination mechanism for ODOT to communicate with providers who may be interested in these opportunities.

ODOT appreciates the work of the bill sponsors, and Business Oregon to draft the (-2) amendments, which clarify that Business Oregon will create and maintain a registry of telecommunications providers in this state. HB 2411 (-2) also outlines the notification process that ODOT will undertake after potential projects are identified, and establishes the length of time in which a provider must respond to ODOT with a statement of interest. ODOT will undergo a rulemaking process to develop guidance on this new process.

SUMMARY

As has become even more apparent over the past year, broadband access is a vital tool for all facets of life in Oregon. ODOT looks forward to partnering with Business Oregon and telecommunications providers to increase broadband access through the state, when our existing projects can accommodate this work. House Bill 2411 (-2) is a positive step towards coordinating efforts and expanding access to broadband.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any additional questions.