

HB 4092 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Ways and Means

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Meeting Dates: 2/24, 2/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Modifies membership and duties of the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council (Council). Creates term limits for members, chairperson, and vice chairperson. Requires appointment of new Council members. Directs Oregon Broadband Office (Office) to develop a Broadband Action Plan and a Digital Equity Plan. Makes modifications to the Council's biennial report to the Legislative Assembly, including that the report be submitted yearly. Requires Office to collect geospatial and other data from internet service providers and other entities with broadband infrastructure to determine eligibility for grants and loans and confirm the allocation of funds from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to the State. Allows Office to enter into nondisclosure agreement with service providers. Exempts proprietary information subject to nondisclosure agreement from disclosure under Oregon public records law. Establishes Connecting Oregon Libraries Fund to support libraries' access to broadband. Requires the Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) to study the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program and make recommendations to help low-income residential customers access broadband or other telecommunications services. Requires PUC to report to Legislative Assembly by June 1, 2023. Removes requirement that Commission report annually on telecommunications competitive zones and providers. Sets operative dates. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Need for broadband expansion in Oregon
- Funding provided by federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
- Fiscal impact to agencies

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Oregon Broadband Office was established by executive order in 2018 and by statute in 2019. It is part of the Oregon Business Development Department and is tasked with supporting broadband development, planning, and deployment in Oregon. The Office is required to support and coordinate efforts with the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council. The Council is made up of 16 members who serve four-year terms.

In 2021, the United State Congress passed the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act which allocated \$65 billion for broadband expansion in the United States. Under the Act, Oregon will receive at least \$100 million with the potential for additional money allocated based on state need. Grants will also be available for specific projects, including for tribal governments.

House Bill 4092 A makes modifications to the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council and to broadband-related programs in Oregon.