



February 1, 2022

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Cate, Vice Chair Kropf, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the American Association of University Women of Oregon (AAUW of OR), we express our strong support for House Bill 4092.

The political, social and cultural divide that Oregonians currently face is exacerbated by the unevenness of internet access. Generally speaking, cities in the Willamette Valley have good internet service, while those outside the Valley have no internet or extremely slow connection speeds. It is time to address this inequitable digital divide by ensuring that broadband access is a reality for all Oregonians.

Equitable broadband access will promote wider exchange of information regarding job opportunities, business transactions, medical and emergency services and other aspects of our lives that many in urban areas take for granted. Students should not find themselves hunting for hotspots with which to complete their homework or connect with teachers and other students. These do not simply present quality of life issues, but internet access can literally be a lifeline.

The federal funds which will be available to develop a broadband system are significant, which underscores the importance of developing in advance a well-reasoned, strategic framework and infrastructure by which to distribute them. Failure to do so before the dollars start rolling out the door will likely lead to mis-spent funds and mis-spent opportunities.

Establishing state-wide, reliable access to the internet provides a foundation for all Oregonians to prosper.

We urge the passage of House Bill 4092.

Respectfully Submitted,

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