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February 28, 2022

Senator Fred Girod and Representative Paul Holvey  
Co-Chairs, Subcommittee on Capital Construction  
Joint Committee On Ways and Means  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for HB 5202 as amended, Section 295 to assist Oregon broadband development

Dear Co-Chairs Girod and Holvey,

On behalf of Link Oregon, I am pleased to write in favor of the provision in HB 5202 (as amended), Section 295. This section provides for an additional appropriation of \$36,795,418 to the state Broadband Fund by drawing entirely on federally allocated funds from the Capital Projects Fund (CPF) in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021.

I serve as the executive director of Link Oregon, a non-profit organization established by the four largest research universities in Oregon – OHSU, Oregon State University, Portland State University, and University of Oregon – and the Enterprise Information Services unit within the State of Oregon. Link Oregon operates a statewide, facilities-based, middle-mile network serving the public and non-profit sectors in Oregon.

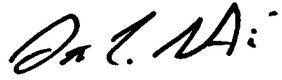
The Broadband Fund is administered by the Oregon Broadband Office within the Oregon Business Development Department and received \$120 million in the state's biennial budget adopted last session for fiscal years 2022-23. Late last year the U.S. Treasury Department determined that Oregon's CPF allocation would amount to \$156.8 million, so this appropriation will insure that Oregon is taking full advantage of this one-time federal funding channel focused on addressing broadband challenges nationally.

We are at a watershed moment. With the secure knowledge that several large tranches of broadband funding are coming to Oregon as part of the anticipated \$100 billion aggregate federal investment nationwide, we are resolute that Oregon must be ready. This additional appropriation will help ensure that we are prepared earlier to exploit this once-in-a-career opportunity to close persistent broadband gaps.

This appropriation will allow Oregon to make strategic use of federal funds for bridging the digital divide by building a statewide broadband infrastructure that supports Link Oregon's vision for our state. That vision includes greater access to education, healthcare, and government services for all Oregonians; improved data transparency and streamlined coordination across agencies; new avenues for economic development; and added resiliency—all positioning Oregon at the forefront of research, sustainability, and innovation.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input and for your continuing leadership to advance the level and reach of broadband services for all Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Corbató". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small flourish at the end.

Steven Corbató  
Executive Director