



February 9, 2023

Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court Se. NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 542

Chair Sollman, Vice-chair Findley, and members of the committee,

The League of Oregon Cities supports SB 542. Connectivity is crucial to modern life. It is being relied on for how people do business, learn, and receive important services like healthcare and emergency services. As technology has evolved, the digital divide has continued to grow. Many times, when the digital divide is referenced, the topic of conversation is centered around access issues in terms of infrastructure. However, affordability and device access are also contributing factors to the digital divide as well.

SB 542 would grant consumers and small businesses alike, access to parts, tools, and service information they need to repair and refurbish products. This will increase access to devices and other electronics. Refurbished electronics are typically more affordable but could also help provide a stop gap for the device needs realized by the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. In September of 2020, it was estimated that there was a 5 million shortfall of computers for school children in America. Devices, now more than ever, play into the livelihoods of anyone who must work or learn from home. A consumer being able to repair devices themselves can also increase the life of that device and keep it running when it is hard to afford a new one. In a time when many are facing financial hardship, the right to repair bill seems even more necessary.

In addition to the ways that this bill can help lessen the digital divide, it will also reduce waste and bring economic vitality back to smaller repair businesses in communities big and small around Oregon. No individual should have to drive multiple hours each way just to get their laptop fixed at an approved store. This impacts all Oregonians but especially Oregonians in rural and remote areas of the state, and historically underserved communities in all corners of the state.

The Legislature has the opportunity to ensure that device access and affordability issues are addressed while also helping the environment and small businesses. The League of Oregon Cities urges the committee to support SB 542.

Respectfully,

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