



February 16, 2023
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SB 542 Right to Repair - Support

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of The Environmental Center in Bend, Oregon in support of SB 542, the Right to Repair bill. For over 30 years, The Environmental Center has worked to embed sustainability into daily life in Central Oregon through program areas related to energy, gardening/nutrition, youth education, and waste. The Environmental Center's Rethink Waste Project (RWP) has its roots in community driven waste solutions as the recycling team in Bend decades ago. Today, the RWP conducts education and engagement activities throughout Deschutes County to first reduce waste, then recover as much as possible.

Here in Deschutes County, we can feel the impact of the buy-use-throw-away-buy-more model. For us, "away" is our local Knott Landfill, which is expected to be full by 2029. The County is in the process of identifying potential locations for a new landfill. Deschutes County is also a long way from the major transportation corridors and commercial centers of our state, which makes it costly to get materials to market. For instance, there is just one Apple authorized repair shop in Central Oregon, a Best Buy in Bend. The nearest is over 90 miles away in Springfield. In addition to many environmental, social, economic evidence others have shared in testimony in support of SB542, reuse and repair is particularly important for us here in Deschutes County for these practical reasons.

In 2013, The Environmental Center's Rethink Waste Project hosted the first Repair Café here in Central Oregon. Repair Cafés are held all around the world, and are free events that connect people with broken stuff to people who like to fix stuff. Over the past 10 years, we hosted 24 Repair Cafés where community members brought in a total of 955 items. Our amazing crew of volunteer fixers repaired a total of 629 items and gave DIY instructions for another 141 items.

We estimate that 81% of items brought to Repair Cafés have been kept out of the landfill. The time and expertise local repair shop technicians, retired fixers, skilled hobbyists, and DIYers share with us for these events, helps us cultivate a culture of repair in our community.

The outcomes from these events further demonstrate why we support Right to Repair (SB542). People are inclined to repair in our communities rather than throw otherwise perfectly good stuff away. Repair Cafes have become increasingly popular because documentation, parts, and tools required for the diagnosis, maintenance, or repair are not widely available or easily accessible. When people watch their things being fixed, they often leave feeling inspired to fix their own things in the future. However, they are often unable to even try because they don't have the correct manuals and tools to do the fixing. By enabling people to fix their stuff, particularly electronics, we can prolong the life of that stuff.

We urge legislators to support SB 542 to reduce environmental damage caused by e-waste, increase affordable access to technology, and support local repair businesses.

Sincerely,

Udara Abeysekera Bickett (she/her)
Rethink Waste Program Manager
The Environmental Center

