



February 21, 2023

House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Morgan and Nguyen, members of the House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business:

For the record, I am Tillamook County Commissioner David Yamamoto, also Co-Chair of AOC's Governance, Revenue and Veterans Steering Committee, as well as county commissioner representative to OBAC (Oregon Broadband Advisory Council), which is an advisory council to Business Oregon's Broadband Office. With the recent progress the Oregon Broadband Office has been making lately, I feel we are on the right track. Thank you for this opportunity to address you this afternoon in support of HB 3201.

Access to affordable, reliable, true "high speed" internet is an essential service that plays a vital role in the economic development potential of rural communities, which to date have been largely left out in this increasing digital divide. HB 3201 aims to bring Oregon statute into alignment with federal rules, guidance, and best practices by eliminating unnecessary restrictions on the Oregon Broadband Fund.

We are at an unprecedented moment in time, where historic levels of federal funding are in the pipeline to address these broadband gaps in rural Oregon. Oregon is at risk of losing out on hundreds of millions of dollars meant to bring life-changing upgrades for hundreds of thousands of Oregonians. This risk stems from conflicts between state law and federal rules governing how the federal funds can be spent.

State statute should not define how many megabits of download/upload speed shall count as adequate. HB 3201 allows definitions of how a household's internet speed must be to be considered "unserved" and "underserved" to be adjusted as technology evolves. In addition, any household that is unserved or underserved should be eligible for upgrades supported by this funding, and HB 3201 provides for that.

Current law gives incumbent internet service providers a "first right of refusal", but projects should be allowed to compete on their merits without incumbent telecom companies getting special powers to intervene.

Having just returned from Washington DC attending the NACo (National Association of Counties) Legislative Conference, while meeting with Senator Wyden, I am concerned that Oregon may be leaving quite a lot of federal funding on the table due to another matter...that of Oregon's mapping. Every state is eligible for a minimum of \$100M, while Oregon could be eligible for almost \$1B. Current updates to our mapping were due mid-January and these updated maps are still woefully inaccurate. Current estimates using this new map might make Oregon eligible for around \$500M and many argue that this mapping process is complete and not able to be revised from here.

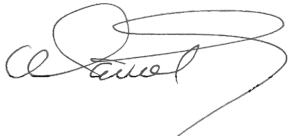
UNITED COUNTIES. UNITED OREGON.

1212 Court St. NE | Salem, OR 97301-4181 | 503.585.8351 | www.oregoncounties.org

When I brought up the issue of these revised maps to Senator Wyden, he agreed that Oregon's maps were still far from accurate and disagreed completely that further updates would not be possible. He encouraged me to continue challenging the maps until the end of June. We all need to encourage Oregon Broadband Office to find ways to reach out to the public to have them look at their own neighborhood and challenge if they disagree with what is shown for their area. These mapping updates, as well as HB 3201 could get us much closer to that \$1B level.

HB 3201 provides for a fair, transparent process for determining which projects should receive funding that allows public engagement, and it provides for a fair and transparent process for challenging projects if there are true grounds for challenges. HB 3201 will help ensure local efforts are rewarded with the funding they need to address their broadband gaps, and that funding is equitably distributed...especially in rural areas of Oregon.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Yamamoto", with a stylized flourish extending from the bottom right.

David Yamamoto
Tillamook County Commissioner
Co-Chair AOC Governance, Revenue and Veterans Steering Committee
Oregon Broadband Advisory Council