

February 21, 2023

Representative Janelle Bynum, Chair  
House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

**Re: Multnomah County Support for HB 3201**

Dear Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Morgan and Nguyen, and Members of the Committee:

Multnomah County urges your support of HB 3201 and the forthcoming -1 amendments. This bill will ensure Oregon can leverage historic federal funding to improve broadband infrastructure, affordability, and adoption in our state. Connectivity is a critical priority for communities across the state, including ours. Even in Multnomah County, there are gaps in high-speed broadband internet services, according to the Federal Communications Commission National Broadband Map. Families are without the essential high-speed connectivity required to receive telehealth services, work remotely, and complete schoolwork at home. Significant investments are needed to reach digital equity for our unserved and underserved communities.

Existing statute threatens Oregon's ability to access hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funds intended to increase broadband availability and digital equity.

HB 3201 offers a solution to this challenge, by creating a flexible, forward-thinking, and community-centered framework for public investments in broadband. It eliminates outdated technology standards currently codified in our law, ensuring that public investments in Oregon keep up with changing technology. By removing an unnecessary anti-competitive provision, it promotes a fair and transparent funding process, ensuring communities benefit. In eliminating rigid restrictions, this bill empowers the Oregon Broadband Office to establish loan and grant programs that are aligned with federal rules, while remaining responsive to the needs of our unserved and underserved communities. This ensures that Oregon's broadband and digital equity funding will be spent effectively and efficiently.

This bill was drafted with extensive input from communities statewide. Without it, Oregon risks missing out on an urgent opportunity to advance digital equity. We urge you to pass HB 3201.

Sincerely,

Tracey Massey  
Director and CIO  
Department of County Assets  
Multnomah County