



May 2, 2023

Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Chair Manning, Vice-Chair Thatcher, members of the Committee:

For the record, I am Tillamook County Commissioner David Yamamoto, 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. Thank you for this opportunity to address you this afternoon in support of HB 3201.

Some 23 years ago, Tillamook County put out a RFP to assist in bringing high speed internet to schools, businesses, hospital and medical offices, county offices, 911 center, sheriff's office, Tillamook Bay Community College, etc. The response we got from our RFP was underwhelming as companies did not think there was enough of a population in Tillamook County to make that find of endeavor financially viable.

This is when we formed an IGA and started what is known as Tillamook Lightwave, which included Tillamook County, Tillamook Peoples Utility District and the Port of Tillamook Bay. Over the past 23 years, we have been very successful in bringing fiber based high speed internet to Tillamook County.

Today, of all Oregon coastal counties, Tillamook County has the most robust fiber backbone of any coastal county. Our job is far from done. We know need to expand our system to bring high speed fiber internet to our residents.

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.

HB 3201 is about making sure Oregon gets the maximum amount of federal broadband grant monies possible. HB 3201 has the support of dozens of organizations across the political spectrum. It represents the consensus of a broad group of over 40 stakeholders...including ISP's, AOC, LOC and community broadband boosters who met repeatedly for months.

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Supporters of HB 3201 have been discussing potential amendments with a handful of stakeholders who voiced concerns about HB 3201 as drafted. While we are still reviewing the exact language, AOC is comfortable with the amendment being proposed. With these amendments, it appears that HB 3201 would still eliminate all of the conflicts between Oregon stature and federal rules authorizing federal grants. Unless something pops up as we continue to review the language, we feel we have reached agreement here and hope the bill can move forward at Thursday's work session.

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,



David Yamamoto

Tillamook County Commissioner

Co-Chair AOC Governance, Revenue and Veterans Steering Committee

Oregon Broadband Advisory Council