



February 26, 2024

Representative Holvey, Chair
House Committee on Business & Labor
Oregon Legislature

Re: Environment Oregon strongly supports Senate Bill 1596

Chair Holvey and Members of the Committee,

Environment Oregon is a policy and action group with one mission: to restore and protect the natural world. Our staff works for clean air, clean water, clean energy, wildlife, open spaces, and a livable climate. Our members across the state put grassroots support behind our research and advocacy. We are writing in strong support of Senate Bill 1596, which would give Oregonians the Right to Repair personal electronic devices and household appliances.

Electronic waste is a growing problem. Americans churn through electronics far faster than we should: on average we buy new cell phones every [2 to 3 years](#), and computers every [4 to 5 years](#). The making of our devices requires rare earth mining that [hurts people and the planet](#), the [emissions](#) of greenhouse gasses, and the creation of tons of toxic [wastewater](#).

To make matters worse, over [400,000 cell phones](#) are discarded every day in the U.S, including an estimated 4,800 here in Oregon. Once we discard our devices, only a [third](#) are recycled, and still some materials such as plastics are impossible to recover. The rest of our discarded electronics go to landfills, where they bring [toxic chemicals](#) that harm our health.

There's a simple solution: fix our stuff and use it for longer. However, the makers of our electronics have an interest in selling us new stuff every year, and they make it harder to repair our devices than it should be.

The dominant business model of buy, use, and throw away is unsustainable. We need to build a future in which we maintain, salvage, and rebuild our stuff. Instead of throwing things away, we need to create a circular economy that stewards and respects the resources and labor that went into making them.

In order to achieve a more sustainable and circular economy, repair is essential.

Senate Bill 1596 would require makers of personal electronics and household appliances to provide fair and reasonable access to replacement parts, specialty tools, manuals, and other resources that are critical to making basic repairs. The bill would ensure that consumers, independent repair shops, and tech refurbishers can fix our devices and extend their lifespans.

By giving Oregonians the Right to Repair, Senate Bill 1596 would help extend the life of electronics and as a result will help to conserve precious resources, mitigate climate pollution and prevent waste. We urge its swift passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Celeste Meiffren-Swango
State Director