

Date:	February 17, 2026
To:	Chair Bowman, Vice Chairs Elmer and Pham, Members of the House Committee on Rules
From:	Association of Oregon Counties Legislative Affairs Manager Justin Low
Subject:	Support - HB 4177, HB 4159, and HB 4161

For the record, my name is Justin Low, and I am providing testimony on behalf of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC). AOC supports HB 4177, HB 4159, and HB 4161.

AOC greatly appreciates the thoughtful, collaborative work that went into these proposals and the leadership that brought stakeholders together to address very real concerns in our current ethics framework. We are especially grateful to Rep. Sosa, Rep. Wallan, and all the other legislators who took time out of their interim break, across multiple months, to try to find meaningful solutions to these concerns.

Over the past several years, well-intended interpretations of public meetings and ethics laws have created uncertainty for local officials — especially around serial communications, administrative errors, and meeting provisions for local officials. These bills provide much-needed clarity. HB 4177 ensures that substantive deliberations happen in the public while allowing officials to gather information and communicate appropriately, HB 4159 brings local government perspective to the Ethics Commission, and HB 4161 restores governing body’s ability to provide food and beverages to public officials during long public meetings.

Together, these reforms refocus Oregon’s ethics laws on preventing true misconduct while allowing governing bodies to function effectively. While we recognize that continued conversations about Oregon’s ethics framework may be necessary during the interim, these bills are an important and pragmatic step forward and counties urge your support. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Justin Low

AOC Legislative Affairs Manager