

February 3, 2020

Chair Representative Nancy Nathanson
House Revenue Committee
State Capitol
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 4079

Dear Chair Nathanson and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 4079. 1000 Friends of Oregon is a nonprofit, membership organization that has worked with Oregonians for more than 40 years to support livable urban and rural communities; protect family farms, forests, and natural areas; and provide transportation and housing choice.

HB 4079 supports economic development in rural Oregon by providing capacity to access and expand broadband infrastructure and services. Business Oregon currently oversees the state's Regional Solutions program, in which the state is divided into 11 regions, each of which, among other things, is charged with locally determining their priorities for economic development. Six of those 11 have concluded that broadband investment is necessary for their communities to grow and thrive.

HB 4079 is responsive to this need, by creating the Oregon Broadband Office within Business Oregon, and directing it to take action to close the existing digital divide, by focusing on unserved and underserved communities that lack broadband infrastructure. HB 4079 expands the Oregon Universal Service Fund to stabilize the existing fund and create a new Broadband Fund.

Thank you,

Scott Hilgenberg
Rural Lands Legislative Attorney
1000 Friends of Oregon

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