

I am submitting testimony in support of HB 2560. As an urban planner who has staffed many public meetings in rural Oregon communities, I think it is critical to continue to provide remote access to meetings after COVID-related restrictions on in-person meetings are lifted. Remote access is a critical component of accessibility! It provides an additional channel for many groups of people to participate in civic life and contribute their voices and perspectives to decision-making. These include (but are in no way limited to) working people, working parents, people with children in the home, people with disabilities, people who rely on public transit for transportation, people who live significant distances from meeting locations, seniors who cannot drive at night, and so many others. Passage of this bill would expand access to public meetings and processes and also provide more options for members of the public to submit testimony. I am in strong support of this bill because I believe it increases opportunities for civic engagement and advances goals to create more equitable and inclusive public processes.