



HB 2790
House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity
February 4th, 2021
Testimony of Brant Wolf
Oregon Telecommunications Association

The Oregon Telecommunications Association (OTA) represents a variety of telecommunications service providers operating throughout Oregon. Our members serve Oregonians living throughout rural, remote and urban Oregon. The OTA does not represent wireless or cable providers.

The OTA is opposed to HB 2790. Our opposition is not a comment on the merits of any proposed project related to the Cape Blanco Airport. Rather, the OTA believes that any broadband related project of this scale, seeking this amount of funding, should be vetted by the newly created Oregon Broadband Office. If this project is worthy of the funding, it should be a successful applicant.

Additionally, the OTA has a member currently providing high-speed broadband service in Curry county and they have recently made significant investments in their local network. Since May 2020, Zippy Fiber has been upgrading their network in the region having deployed a fiber to the location network in North Bend, Coos Bay and Coquille. These projects enabled their 2021 scheduled upgrades of their network in Brookings, Gold Beach and Bandon. Outside of this region, Zippy Fiber has demonstrated it's interest in partnering with public entities to address their individual needs. For example, Zippy Fiber recently signed a contract with the Port of Whitman, Washington to deploy a fiber to the location network in five Washington communities.

Further, recent winners of the FCC Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) auction process include one entity that will provide telecommunications service along the south Coast of Oregon. Those funds are specifically meant to provide access to high-speed, fiber based broadband. A little more than 5.5 million dollars was recently awarded in Curry County. The OTA is not aware of whether those funds are directly relatable to the Cape Blanco Airport project. However, it is one more pot of dollars to be used to provide service to the area.

In summary, the OTA asks the members of this Committee to oppose HB 2790 and instead focus legislative efforts on measures that will assist existing providers, funds, and programs in Curry county. There are several measures under consideration in this Committee that will help accomplish the goal promoting access to broadband in rural areas of Oregon, including Curry county.