



City of Portland

Office for Community Technology

▲ Broadband & Communications Policy

▲ Cable Regulation & Consumer Protection

▲ Utility Franchises, Licenses & Wireless

Commissioner Carmen Rubio
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March 9, 2021

Representative John Lively, Chair
House Economic Recovery and Prosperity Committee
900 Court Street NE, HR
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Lively and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comment in support of HB 3256-1, requiring the Oregon Public Utility Commission and the Oregon Broadband Office to study broadband affordability programs and report back to the legislature in September 2022.

The City of Portland via the Mt. Hood Cable Regulatory Commission conducted a community technology needs study in 2019. Results of the study showed that residents in Multnomah County believe Internet to be an essential service and as essential as electricity. Broadband connectivity is necessary for racial and social equity in education, employment, healthcare, and civic engagement. Connectivity is essential for individuals to fully participate in society and without it face difficulty accessing resources.

COVID-19 highlighted and exacerbated the impact of not having home Internet. For individuals with low incomes, the barriers to accessing home Internet include lack of cost transparency, charges for equipment, and being locked into unaffordable contracts. In addition, low cost Internet options often don't meet the bandwidth needs for individuals and families.

The City of Portland is dedicated to working with state and federal partners to meet the telecommunications needs of our residents. We look forward to participating in the study and examining the results to better understand the resources available to residents and strategize new resources to ensure our residents have the ability to fully participate in digital community.

Thank you,

Elisabeth Perez
Interim Director, City of Portland Office for Community Technology

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