

April. 24, 2021  
Before the Oregon Legislature  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means, Senate Bill SB 5555

Co-Chairs and Members of the Joint Committee:

My name is Doug Olson. I'm an elected director of the Tillamook People's Utility District and its current President. I'm also a board member and President of Tillamook Lightwave, an ORS 190 organization owned by Tillamook PUD, the Port of Tillamook Bay and Tillamook County.

Tillamook Lightwave has been in existence for about 20 years. It was formed 20 years ago to provide "middle mile" broadband service throughout Tillamook County. It currently serves our schools, hospital, medical facilities, cities, Tillamook County and many larger businesses including the famous Tillamook Creamery.

Tillamook Lightwave operates a cable landing station in Pacific City which provides on shore connectivity for the University of Washington's Ocean Observatories Initiative, Hawaiki Submarine Cable from New Zealand, Australia and Hawaii and Microsoft under-sea cable from Asia. Facebook is completing an under-sea connection two miles north.

Even with all this hi-tech around us, many residents and businesses in Tillamook County have no or very poor internet service. Many are still using dial-up service from the 1990s.

In the Nestucca School District, over 60 percent of the students have poor or NO internet service. The kids are simply not in school as a practical matter. That's time and education that will be nearly impossible to recapture.

Lack of adequate broadband also affects the entire economy of the Oregon Coast, especially in Tillamook County. It's both an educational and economic crisis, made much worse by the current pandemic.

The request from Rep. Gombert is for \$2.6 million for South Tillamook County. That will provide high speed broadband service for approximately 650 homes and businesses. Additional funding is being sought for the entire county and much of NW Oregon.

The infrastructure for fiber to the home is currently in place through Tillamook Lightwave. What's missing is the final link to homes and businesses, which will be supported by user fees.

High speed broadband today is much like rural electrification was many years ago. It's simply a necessity much as water, sewer, electricity and cell phones are today.

I ask you...would any of you give up your internet broadband connection today?

Rep. Gombert's request for broadband service for Tillamook County is reasonable, very doable and is supported by educators, businesses, and regular folks.

You have the power and resources to make a profound difference for rural Oregon!

Please do the RIGHT THING!

Thank you!