

Chair Wagner, Vice Chair Girod, Members of the Committee,

I am writing to you today on behalf of COIN, the Consolidated Oregon Indivisible Network. We represent thousands of Oregonians who are active in their local communities as well as in their state government. COIN strongly supports HB2560.

The emergency order to require telecommunications access to public meetings over this past year has been a game changer, especially for those who live in rural areas far from our state capital. Nearly everyone who has wanted to has been able to fully participate in their state and local government, to weigh in on matters that affect us all. We recognize that citizens who live in areas where rural broadband does not reach may still have limitations in their access to meetings and hearings, but that is not a reason to deny access to those who do have adequate internet access while we move to improve broadband access to all of rural Oregon.

The genie is out of the bottle. We now know what it is like to be able to fully participate as citizens and we can't put that genie back in the bottle. We expect to continue participating to the fullest extent possible, without traveling for hours, without contributing carbon emissions to our atmosphere, and without risking the dangers of driving on congested freeways to attend hearings in person.

We urge you to pass HB2560 in your committee with recommendation to pass this bill in the full Senate.

Thank you,

Deborah Ferrer,
The Dalles, Oregon