

Talent, Oregon  
February 1, 2022

Chair Lively, Vice Chair Cate, Vice Chair Kropf, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing as a member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Oregon, Ashland where I serve as a member of the Public Policy Committee. I express my strong support for House Bill 4092.

Access to Broadband internet makes it possible to have the world at your fingertips. It allows us to function and thrive in our society as a full member. Broadband infrastructure supports and enables every aspect of work and life. Where you live in Oregon makes a difference about whether you have the needed accessibility to fast, sustainable broadband. This access is critical to families, students, healthcare providers, business owners, police, firefighters and everyone in our society.

Our rural areas and some parts of our urban and suburban areas do not have this access. In these areas education, economic development, agriculture, public health, public safety, energy management, national and global connectivity, government and civic engagement are all dependent on "closing the digital divide".

According to a white paper from The Pew Charitable Trust dated September 1, 2021, "Research indicates that people living in rural areas struggle to obtain broadband connections mainly because of the low density of housing. Fewer people living in a community, especially over large swaths of land, translates into higher costs to build and maintain the most common broadband technologies."

I live in a small town with 6,500 citizens in a semi-rural area that had the access to Broadband. I want my fellow Oregonians to have the same fast, reliable internet access that I have.

To ensure that digital inclusion make connectivity accessible to all Oregon citizens, major investments need to be made. With the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) monies and funding from the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act (IIJA) going directly to the states, Oregon can leverage an expected \$200 million dollars to expand internet service in underserved communities.

I urge you to vote yes on House Bill 4092.

Respectfully,

Cathleen Ledford  
Public Policy Committee Member  
Ashland Branch  
American Association of University Women of Oregon

Cc: Representative Pam Marsh  
Senator Jeff Golden