



House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity
Testimony in Support of HB 4092 Oregon Broadband Advisory Council

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AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. With over 500,000 members in Oregon, AARP works to strengthen communities and advocate for what matters most to families, with a focus on health security, financial stability and personal fulfillment.

AARP Oregon supports HB 4092 with the -2 Amendments. There is a lot of money at stake as the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) begins the process of allocating funds appropriated for broadband under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). HB 4092 would take many important steps toward preparing to receive and prudently administer these funds. We support involving the Advisory Council in the process of grant oversight and recognition of bringing forward digital equity interests of historically disadvantaged communities. We also appreciate that the bill identifies additional ways to involve the state in expanding broadband affordability.

Throughout the country, AARP actively supports broadband deployment to unserved communities and also supports policies and programs that facilitate broadband adoption. Our members include those who live in communities with residential broadband service, who are internet-savvy, and who use broadband internet access on a daily basis. Our members also include those who live in communities without broadband internet access. And, finally, we have members who simply lack the digital know-how to avail themselves of the many benefits of high-speed access to the internet.

The benefits of high-speed internet access to older adults are well-recognized. Affordable and reliable internet access helps older adults to age in place productively and safely with a higher quality of life than would otherwise exist. The broadband platform supports access to telemedicine, civic engagement, entertainment, on-line learning and other internet-based applications that address isolation and health challenges.

For these reasons, AARP urges passage of HB 4092 with the -2 Amendments.