



**Marion County**  
OREGON

**Board of Commissioners**

February 1, 2022

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House Committee on Economic Recovery and Prosperity  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS**

Danielle Bethell, Chair  
Colm Willis  
Kevin Cameron

RE: Marion County Supports HB 4092

Dear Representative Lively and House Committee Members,

**CHIEF  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
OFFICER**

Jan Fritz

The Marion County Board of Commissioners supports House Bill 4092, which will equip the Oregon Broadband Office (OBO) with the tools necessary to ensure that Oregon has a reliable, redundant, and robust statewide broadband system. While we support the bill, there are a couple areas of concern that we would recommend the committee further explore. The bill does not specifically define what “rural” means in the broadband context. Additionally, the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council membership should be expanded to include additional members from Oregon Department of Transportation, Public Utility Council, and a subject matter expert that understands the overall future trends of digital technologies and cybersecurity. Finally, the language in the bill does not seem to authorize the Oregon Broadband Office (OBO) to use the non-disclosure or proprietary collected data from providers to create public-facing maps. The bill authorizes the OBO to collect this data but does not compel the providers to share the data, nor does it give the OBO authority to publicly use this data for planning purposes and to share among stakeholders.

Broadband internet is essential infrastructure for everything from education to healthcare. The pandemic has highlighted gaps in this vital infrastructure throughout the state, particularly in rural and unincorporated communities. It is imperative that Oregon use its resources to expand access and provide the necessary infrastructure for those communities to be competitive with urban areas. In Marion County, the Ag community needs access to broadband. Technology in the Ag industry is evolving, creating ways for farmers to become more efficient. Expanding access and developing broadband infrastructure will enable our agricultural producers to remain competitive for years to come.

Marion County’s goal is to ensure that all its residents have access to reliable internet that is easily accessible and competitively priced. In Marion County, we have created a strategic plan and have worked to build public-private partnerships to achieve our broadband access goals. HB 4092 lays the foundation to advance access to broadband.

The bill makes necessary changes to the Oregon Broadband Advisory Council, sets up a framework for additional investment, creates the e-rate fund for libraries, and creates a study focused on modernizing the telecommunications assistance program. This bill would help achieve Marion County's goal and give greater access to broadband throughout rural Oregon.

Thank you for your continued work to bring broadband fiber to rural communities and businesses. The Marion County Board of Commissioners urges a yes vote on HB 4092.

Sincerely,



Danielle Bethell, Chair



Colm Willis, Vice Chair



Kevin Cameron, Commissioner