



February 9, 2023

Senator Sollman, Chair
Senate Committee on Energy & Environment
Oregon Legislature

Re: Environment Oregon strongly supports Senate Bill 542

Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Committee,

Environment Oregon is a statewide, member-based environmental advocacy organization working for clean air, clean water, open space and a liveable climate, representing tens of thousands of members across Oregon. We are writing in strong support of Senate Bill 542, which would give Oregonians the Right to Repair their household electronic devices.

Electronic waste is a growing problem. Americans churn through electronics far faster than we should: on average we buy new cell phones every [2 to 3 years](#), and computers every [4 to 5 years](#). The making of our devices requires rare earth mining that [hurts people and the planet](#), the [emissions](#) of greenhouse gasses, and the creation of tons of toxic [wastewater](#).

To make matters worse, over [400,000 cell phones](#) are discarded every day in the U.S, including an estimated 4,800 here in Oregon. Once we discard our devices, only a [third](#) are recycled, and still some materials such as plastics are impossible to recover. The rest of our discarded electronics go to landfills, where they bring [toxic chemicals](#) that harm our health.

There's a simple solution: fix our stuff and use it for longer. However, the makers of our electronics have an interest in selling us new stuff every year, and they make it harder to repair our devices than it should be.

The dominant business model of buy, use, and throw away is unsustainable. We need to build a future in which we maintain, salvage, and rebuild our stuff. Instead of throwing things away, we need to create a circular economy that stewards and respects the resources and labor that went into making them.

In order to achieve a more sustainable and circular economy, repair is essential.

Senate Bill 542 would require makers of household electronics to provide fair and reasonable access to replacement parts, specialty tools, manuals, and other resources that are critical to making basic repairs. The bill would ensure that consumers, independent repair shops, and tech refurbishers can fix our devices and extend their lifespans. The ability to repair these electronics would:

- Prevent the unnecessary expense of resources (rare-earth minerals, fossil fuels, water) required to make our electronics, only to throw them away in a few years.
- Prevent the needless toxic waste flowing to landfills from our discarded electronics.
- Create more opportunities to refurbish electronics.
- Promote repair, reuse, and a circular economy.
- Encourage sustainable and durable designs.

Unfortunately, there is opposition to the idea, led by manufacturers who stand to gain when the public rapidly replaces all their devices for simple failures. Those opposition forces will make a host of arguments about damage that could be done when people have access to the parts, tools and information needed to conduct repairs. Luckily, the Federal Trade Commission spent two years investigating these claims and found there was essentially no evidence to support the assertion that repair access undermines safety, security, privacy or intellectual property. All of their work is found in the May 2021 report, "[Nixing the Fix](#)."

By giving Oregonians the Right to Repair, Senate Bill 542 would help extend the life of electronics and as a result will help to conserve precious resources, mitigate climate pollution and prevent waste. We urge its swift passage.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important bill.

Sincerely,

Celeste Meiffren-Swango
State Director