



Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

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To: Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley and members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

From: Jennifer Hill-Hart, Policy Manager, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB)

Re: Support for SB 542 - Right to Repair

CUB is a membership-based 501(c)3 nonprofit consumer advocacy organization that represents the interests of utility consumers, including telecommunications customers, before legislative, administrative and judicial bodies. We submit this testimony to ask for your support for SB 542. This bill will ensure that Oregonians have the right to repair their consumer electronic equipment which will help bridge Oregon's digital divide and make access to telephone service more affordable.

The digital divide was an urgent policy concern before COVID-19 and has been further exposed by the pandemic. Oregon has responded by prioritizing public policies that increase access to affordable and reliable broadband service. Oregon law also ensures Oregonians have access to adequate and affordable telephone service and the Oregon Public Utility Commission's Oregon Lifeline Program provides a monthly discount on phone or broadband service for low-income households. SB 542 builds upon Oregon's long history of ensuring households have access to critical communication services by broadening access to affordable and reliable access consumer electronic equipment such as phones, tablets, and computers.

Oregon small businesses and community organizations do an admirable job of repairing and furnishing affordable and reliable devices for Oregonians who experience barriers, like cost, to accessing electronic devices. Unfortunately, manufacturer repair restrictions unnecessarily limit what Oregon businesses can repair and leave Oregonians no option but to pay for the services offered by the manufacturer or get a new device. SB 542 is tailored to address this need by ensuring that consumers and independent repair providers have reasonable access to the same physical parts, diagnostic tools, and manuals that manufacturers provide to affiliated repair providers.

Empowering repair savvy consumers and community-oriented small businesses with repair essentials will extend the useful lives of consumer electronics. This will save consumers money and establishes a robust and unfettered marketplace for used, safe, and affordable digital devices. These devices will then make their way to Oregonians who may otherwise lack access to communication devices.

SB 542 will remove repair limitations, promote small businesses, and save Oregon consumers money. Oregon should remove the manufacturer's thumb from the scale of what ought to be a fair and reasonable marketplace for consumer electronic equipment. CUB urges the Committee's support for SB 542 and swift movement toward passage. Thank you for your consideration.