



Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Julie Fitzgerald Supporting HB 3201:

Proposed legislation aligns state statute with federal rules and eliminates restrictions on the Oregon Broadband Fund, leverages more federal funds

Scheduled for public hearing on Feb. 21, 2023, before the
House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Morgan and Nguyen, and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying in support of HB 3201 that provides a ‘road map’ for improving and extending Broadband Internet telecommunications infrastructure statewide and facilitates Oregon’s opportunity to leverage increased federal funds for public benefit.

Improving public access to high-speed broadband Internet is a crucial goal of state significance that can be advanced with passage of this legislation. The City of Wilsonville is working with the Cities of Sherwood and King City and Washington County to expand Broadband access in our communities with the support of a 2021 State ARPA legislative allocation.

Oregon has a historic opportunity to close the digital divide and address these challenges through the millions of dollars that the federal government has allocated for broadband in the states. If we act, up to \$700 million may be coming to Oregon from the ARPA broadband infrastructure funds and the Broadband Equity, Access and Deployment (BEAD) Program.

HB 3201 aims to bring Oregon statute into alignment with federal rules, guidance, and best practices by eliminating unnecessary restrictions on the Oregon Broadband Fund in order to keep up with changes in technology and requirements from certain funding sources. The bill updates how broadband funds are spent by continuing to give preference to unserved areas in Oregon; promotes competition for grants by reinforcing a process for public notice and comments on applications to ensure any conflicts are identified and addressed early in the process instead of after the awards are given; and addresses the need for a strong and fair challenge process for grant awards through an independent judicial review process.

The City appreciates your consideration this testimony and urges a Do-Pass vote on HB 3201. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Julie Fitzgerald'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Fitzgerald, Mayor
City of Wilsonville