



**Testimony of
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Support for Oregon House Bill 2766

**Before the
House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business**

February 21, 2023

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, on behalf of CTIA®, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I am testifying in support of House Bill 2766 related to broadband deployment.

The wireless industry strongly supports expanding broadband coverage and has been on the cutting-edge of promoting its deployment to meet ever-growing consumer demand. In 2021 alone, wireless carriers invested nearly \$35 billion in private funds to grow and improve the nation's networks.¹ This investment also fuels economic growth, including in Oregon, where the wireless industry supports more than 50,000 jobs and generates \$17.3 billion in GDP growth.

As you know, the federal government is currently working to deploy \$42.5 billion in funding for states and territories to support broadband deployment projects. The program's objective is clear: connecting all Americans to high-speed internet, with an emphasis on those unserved. As Oregon moves forward, it is critical that the state ensure policies are in place that are inclusive of all technologies to address digital equity and enable streamlined deployment of broadband infrastructure. A technologically neutral approach to broadband deployment that supports wireless alongside fiber and other options promotes competition and enables Oregon to

¹ <https://www.ctia.org/news/u-s-wireless-investment-hits-record-high>



achieve maximum benefit from state and federal funding. Improved and appropriate siting and land use regulation will preserve the role of local governments while facilitating and encouraging further capital investment in broadband.

Of the various broadband-related bills currently under consideration by this Committee, HB 2766 – the Oregon Broadband Access Point Investment Acceleration Study Act of 2023 – will most effectively ensure Oregon maximizes its efforts to expand connectivity. The bill focuses on identifying both the opportunities and challenges related to deployment of broadband infrastructure, particularly the barriers to:

- Investment in, and effective deployment of, wireless and wireline infrastructure;
- Connectivity for unserved and underserved communities; and
- Permitting policies, regulatory conditions and other factors influencing broadband access.

As Oregon evaluates how it will utilize and allocate both state and federal broadband funding, it is critical to underscore the extent to which policies related to both regulatory certainty and technological neutrality help drive the highly competitive environment in the wireless industry. CTIA members must compete for customers every day, and the result of that competition is lower prices, faster speeds, and more options for broadband, including fixed wireless access that provides broadband service in the home. Consider the following:

- *Faster Speeds:* Wireless speeds have increased 31x over the past decade.
- *Significant Investment:* From 2010 to 2020, capital expenditures by mobile wireless providers totaled one-third of a trillion dollars (\$316B) and as noted above, \$35 billion in 2021 alone.
- *Lower Prices:* In 2010, an unlimited data, talk and text plan cost \$113.87 on average for one line. By 2019, that same plan cost \$64.95—a 43% decrease. And mobile data prices “per megabyte” fell some 98 percent, from 20 cents in 2011 to one-half of one cent by 2019. Further, the decline in wireless prices in 2017



was so significant it drove the average price for core consumer goods down across the economy for the first time since 2010.

CTIA shares Oregon's commitment to advancing broadband deployment and adoption across the state, and we are eager to continue to help the State make progress in bridging the digital divide. HB 2766 will help do this by identifying how the carriers, the State, local governments and other stakeholders can improve connectivity and investment through siting, permitting and fee policies. Together, we can remove existing barriers and create opportunities to ensure Oregonians have access to high-quality broadband service throughout the State.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask for your support of HB 2766.