

1. Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Morgan and Nguyen, and Members of the Committee,
2. My name is Malena Lechon-Galdos, I use she/her pronouns, and I am here on behalf of the digital justice non-profit, suma, in support of HB 3201
3. Suma works to build an inclusive technology future with low-income people, people of color and other frontline communities. We believe that responsive technology investments and institutions can build community power to address climate change, poverty and racial injustice.
4. Access to affordable and reliable high-speed internet is a racial, economic, and social justice issue-an essential service that plays a role in economic and social development, connecting communities to education and job opportunities, healthcare, social safety nets, and support networks.
5. The pandemic revealed that the digital divide that exists in our state is *beyond* a simple urban rural divide. So much of Oregon is concentrated in urban and suburban centers. Roughly 130,000 estimated Oregon households lack internet service, and over 100,000 of these households are in urban and suburban areas.
6. In the wake of the pandemic, front-line community organizations like suma stepped in to meet the immediate need from community members, due to the digital divide gaps that have been created by digital redlining and digital discrimination.
7. Community members went to trusted organizations when internet access became essential to their everyday life for the resources they needed and relied on. Organizations created digital navigator positions, handed out tools like hot spots, and computer devices in order to meet the immediate need and demand. Broadband access and affordability are integral to meeting community needs- access so many of us take for granted.
8. Our experiences demonstrate clearly – broadband investments are needed in rural, frontier *and* in historically underserved communities- which we know reside in urban areas.
9. HB 3201 supports these statewide investments. It recognizes that our future broadband investments must be different from the private and profitable methods that in the past, left too many communities in our state behind.
10. To realize this future, HB 3201 proposes changes developed by a broad group of public and private stakeholders, that included frontline organizations, which were not at the table when SB1603 was created and passed.
11. We know that having these voices and lived experiences at the table is integral to creating a broadband fund that is equitable, flexible and considers the diverse needs of different parts of our state.
12. As a state, it is imperative that we take advantage and try to maximize this historical, federal investment.

13. Thank you for your continued leadership in working towards closing the digital divide and ensuring all Oregonians have access to quality, affordable, reliable and accessible broadband.