



Northwest Regional Education Service District

April 27, 2023

To: Senate Committee on Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

From: Stuart Long, Chief Information Officer, Northwest Regional Education Service District

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 3201A Aligning Statute to Maximize Federal Broadband Funding

Chair Manning, Vice-chair Thatcher,

Northwest Regional Education Service District serves school districts from the western suburbs of Portland out to Tillamook and Astoria on the coast. Given that broad geographic range in service to school districts, we had a unique insight into the various experiences of schools trying to connect their students during the COVID19 pandemic.

We witnessed districts of all sizes in urban, suburban, and rural locations struggle to connect families to high speed internet because the broadband infrastructure where they lived was insufficient or not available. The pandemic moved broadband into a role as an essential service for students and their families on par with other utilities such as electricity and water. Our organization has been a part of the work to expand broadband ever since and we believe that HB3201A, as is, delivers the most effective answer to providing Oregonians this essential service. We must prevent a repeat of these same struggles for students and their families in the future.

Therefore we believe that Oregon's coming public investment in broadband requires a different approach from the previous methods that have left too many rural, frontier, and historically underserved communities behind. Moving 3201A as is, respects the highly collaborative and inclusive process that has shaped the legislation thus far and best positions Oregon to maximize opportunities for federal funding.

Thank you for your investment of time in support of ensuring all Oregonians have access to quality, affordable, reliable and accessible broadband and for your consideration of our input.

Sincerely,

Chief Information Officer

Northwest Regional Education Service District

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