



SIERRA CLUB

OREGON CHAPTER

Oregon State Legislature
Senate Committee on Energy and Environment
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

February 9, 2024

RE: Support for Senate Bill 1596, Relating to Right to Repair Electronics

Dear Chair Sollman, Vice-Chair Findley, and Members of the Senate Energy and Environment Committee,

On behalf of the more than 74,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club Oregon Chapter, we are writing in support of Senate Bill 1596, which would expand Oregonians' right to repair electronics without being forced to only work with original manufacturers.

This is the right time to pass this Right to Repair bill. Oregon was the first state to put forward a Right to Repair proposal in 2019, with House Bill 2688. That bill died in committee. Backers tried again with HB 2698 in 2021, but that bill also failed to make it out of committee. In 2023, Senate Bill 542 made it to the Senate floor, but it was sent back to committee, where it too died. Meanwhile, California, New York, Minnesota and Colorado have all passed bills expanding the right to repair electronics. It is time for Oregon to rejoin states on the forefront of this important issue.

SB 1596 is common-sense legislation. It allows consumers the right to repair their own products instead of going back to the original manufacturer for service. It will require that device makers offer technical documents and specialty tools needed to fix broken phones, laptops, and appliances available to small repair shops as well as tech-savvy owners who want to make fixes themselves. Making access to repairs more widespread will reduce costs for consumers and reduce unnecessary waste. People will keep their devices longer and small repair services businesses will benefit from being able to carry out more kinds of repairs.

Right to repair is a win-win for both the environment and consumers. It promotes sustainability by reducing electronic waste. In the United States alone, over 9 million tons of electronics end up in landfills each year. Worldwide, we generate 40 million tons of

electronic waste yearly. That is akin to throwing away 800 laptops every second.¹ E-waste represents 2% of America's trash in landfills, but it equals 70% of overall toxic waste. Much of this waste could be avoided if consumers had the ability to easily repair their phones, laptops, tablets, and appliances instead of being forced to either work through expensive and difficult repair processes with the original manufacturer, or buy a replacement product.

Consumers face problems when trying to repair their equipment. It often includes proprietary technology parts. Manufacturers restrict access to repair services, claiming potential violations of their rights. In truth, this is a marketing strategy, as the law doesn't grant manufacturers control over property post-sale. Such limitations affect equipment trade in the used market. **For example, a barrier to repair is “parts pairing”, which is the practice of using unique digital identifiers to prevent components from being interchangeable. SB 1596 would ban this anti-repair practice—a provision of this bill that we enthusiastically support.** The bill's focus is primarily on phones, tablets, laptops and many home appliances. It contains carve-outs for certain products, such as video game consoles and medical devices.

SB 1596 secures the consumer's right to choose their equipment's repair terms, encouraging a competitive local repair and resale market. The Right to Repair requirements target manufacturers, not distributors, retailers, or franchisees. Manufacturers will determine the best method for providing parts and information.

Changes were made in the bill that addressed concerns that surfaced in 2023. That includes language to better protect device makers' intellectual property and address security concerns. SB 1596 also does away with a provision that would have allowed consumers to sue manufacturers, relying instead on the attorney general to handle enforcement of this act.

After all these years of deliberating, we have arrived at a strong policy that needs no further amendments. We strongly urge you to support SB 1596 and pass it onwards to the Senate floor for a vote. SB 1596 models an alternative to a throw-away society, gives another option than toxic waste generation, supports small businesses, empowers consumers, and moves us towards a more sustainable world.

¹ The World Counts <https://www.theworldcounts.com/stories/electronic-waste-facts> World Health Organization: [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/electronic-waste-\(e-waste\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/electronic-waste-(e-waste))

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Damon Motz-Storey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Damon" written in a smaller, more legible script than the last name "Motz-Storey", which is more stylized and overlapping.

Damon Motz-Storey, Chapter Director
Sierra Club Oregon Chapter