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February 8, 2024

RE: Written Testimony for Senate Bill 1596

Dear Senate Committee On Energy and Environment,

I am writing today on behalf of Waste-Free Advocates, a 501(c)(3) organization that is dedicated to encouraging Oregonians to create a sustainable future by empowering and connecting communities to minimize over-consumption and waste. I am writing today in strong support of Senate Bill 1596.

Right to Repair is an important tool for diverting waste from Oregon's waste stream. Overall, electronic waste or e-waste is difficult to recycle, and this is particularly true of mobile phones. An EPA estimate puts the percentage of discarded phones that are recycled at just 8 percent, as opposed to desktop computers, of which 38 percent are recycled. Because cell phones contain toxic metals, that waste can pose dangers to public health if it is buried in a landfill or incinerated. It's estimated that 40% of the heavy metals in U.S. landfills come from discarded electronics, according to EPEAT, a green electronic rating system.

Right to Repair increases affordable access to technology. Access to the internet is essential to participate in our society, but some low-income Oregonians don't have access to devices necessary to connect to the internet. Estimates show that more than 75,000 computers were needed by students across Oregon to support distance learning during the pandemic. Creating a stronger secondary market for electronics by removing barriers to repair would help get technology in the hands of people who need it.

Other reasons to support Right to Repair:

- Right to Repair empowers people to reduce waste by fixing their own stuff, keeping devices working longer and off the scrap heap.

- Right to Repair helps people learn STEM skills and can foster a lifetime of interest and love of electronics and technology.
- Right to Repair improves cyber security. While industry opposition argues the opposite, the experts at Harvard's Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society testified that Right to Repair would improve cyber security -- especially in older devices which lack manufacturer support.
- Right to Repair creates local economic opportunity and supports local business.
- Right to Repair prevents price-gouging from manufacturers for replacement parts.
- Right to Repair gives consumers more options, and fosters a more competitive marketplace for high-tech goods.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views and our support for Senate Bill 1596. We urge the committee to support this bill to help to stem the massive tide of e-waste and empower people to fix their own electronics.

Sincerely,

Waste-Free Advocates Board of Directors and our member coalition of environmental advocates

Julia Bonnheim, Resource Director

Brittney Wendell, Board President

Alaina Labak, Board Vice President

Tara Knierim, Board Treasurer

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