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February 25, 2024

House Committee on Business and Labor
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 1596: Right to Repair

Chair Holvey Vice-Chairs Elmer and Sosa, Members of the Committee,

Metro supports SB 1596.

Metro is the regional government of the Portland metropolitan area, with major responsibility for managing the region's solid waste and providing opportunities for recycling and waste reduction. We serve a population of almost 1.7 million, providing services and educational resources that protect the environment and reduce the amount and toxicity of the solid waste stream.

Connectivity is more and more crucial to modern life. It is being relied on for how people do business, learn, and receive important services like healthcare and emergency services. As technology has evolved, e-waste has boomed, and the digital divide has continued to grow. SB 1596 would grant consumers and small businesses alike, access to parts, tools and service information they need to repair and refurbish products. This will increase access to refurbished electronics. A consumer being able to repair devices themselves can also increase the life of that device, keep it out of the waste stream and keep it running when it is hard to afford a new one. In a time when many are facing financial hardship, the right to repair bill seems even more necessary. In addition to the ways that this bill can help lessen the digital divide, it will also reduce waste and bring economic vitality back to smaller repair businesses in communities big and small around our region and the state.

While Oregonians are privileged to have access to electronic recycling through the DEQ E-Cycles program and pathways to recycling at the end of life for a product are important, reuse yields more environmental and economic benefits than recycling. Maintaining products in their original form and delaying or preventing the purchase of new items minimizes resource consumption and saves the embodied energy used to make the original product. Additionally, it will keep Metro transfer station workers safer, because reducing electronics in the trash will lead to less battery fires in the garbage pits at our stations. As technology continues to advance rapidly, Metro supports efforts to keep consumer electronic devices in use as long as possible.

We urge your support for SB 1596.

Sincerely,

Jenna Jones
State and Regional Affairs Advisor
Metro

