



Oregon
Community
Brokerages

February 3, 2025

To: Sen Sollman, Chair, Senate Committee on Energy and Environment

From: Katie Rose, Executive Director, Oregon Community Brokerages

Re: Support for SB 550, making wheelchairs and other assistive technology more easily repaired and maintained

Chair Sollman and members of the committee,

Oregon Community Brokerages is comprised of the 14 Support Service Brokerages across Oregon. Collectively, we provide case management services to nearly 8,000 adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) living in their own or family homes in every community throughout the state. We connect people with what matters to them and support them to make the important decisions and choices that shape lives.

We all rely on technology to move through our day-to-day routines. For some people with disabilities, this assistive technology takes the form of complex medical equipment and adaptive mobility equipment like wheelchairs. This equipment becomes an intimate part of a person's life and function, with many personal configurations and specialized customization to meet their unique needs. When this equipment breaks down, it has a far-reaching and immediate impact on their daily lives. SB 550 aims to make it easier for people to get back in action by removing barriers to repairing this equipment.

Technological advancements in electric wheelchairs and other complex assistive equipment have greatly increased their use and efficacy. However, these advancements take us further away from being able to maintain or address basic repair issues. If you have experience with car repair from a few decades ago versus car repair now, you understand this concept—increasing technology puts up barriers that disallow mechanical repairs. Without software access and updates, for example, many pieces of advanced technology are useless. These necessary components are often proprietary in nature, making it impossible for people to find quick fixes to the equipment that they often view as an extension of their physical selves.

SB 550 includes this complex assistive equipment under existing protections, making “tools for diagnosing, maintaining, repairing or updating consumer [electronic] equipment available at no charge and without impeding access to the tools or the efficient and cost-

effective use of the tools, except that the original equipment manufacturer may charge for the reasonable and actual costs of preparing and shipping a physical tool that a person requests,” and making parts available to a wider variety of repair providers. This will increase the ability of local providers to repair this equipment, and support people with IDD to get back to their lives.

We encourage full support for SB 550. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in support of SB 550, and the work to remove barriers for people with disabilities.