



Testimony of Sam Ackley
Hunter Communications
House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade
In Support of HB 3148
March 12, 2025

Chair, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 3148. Hunter Communications is a fiber-optic telecommunications and construction company that has been building communications networks and providing broadband services to rural and underserved communities across Oregon for more than 30 years. Hunter Communications was established in Oregon and continues to be headquartered here. We understand firsthand the importance of accessible, affordable broadband for all Oregonians and have worked tirelessly to expand our residential broadband services to many households, including those in low-income areas, thanks in part to the Oregon Lifeline plan.

Hunter Communications has had the privilege of serving numerous low-income households throughout the state, and today, roughly 10% of our total residential customer base benefits from the Lifeline plan. This program has been essential in bridging the digital divide and enabling those who otherwise would not have access to reliable broadband to connect with the world around them, from education to healthcare and economic opportunities.

We fully support HB 3148 for these key reasons:

- Continued & Enhanced Support for Low-Income Oregonians: HB 3148 guarantees that low-income residents of Oregon who depend on the Lifeline plan to obtain and utilize broadband services will not lose access to this vital resource due to the program's conclusion. For companies such as ours, this legislation offers a framework to continue providing affordable and accessible broadband, ensuring all of our customers retain access to essential services.
- Lifeline plan Enhancement: The transition from the Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP) to Oregon Lifeline represents a necessary and beneficial advancement. The expansion of broadband access through the Lifeline plan ensures its continued relevance and effectiveness in the evolving digital landscape. Additionally, it enhances the impact of various broadband deployment funding programs (e.g., RDOF, ARPA, BEAD, etc.) by not only making services available but also ensuring they are accessible and affordable.

From a provider's perspective, particularly in rural areas of Oregon, the primary obstacles to accessing broadband service are still availability, accessibility and cost. Hunter Communications is proud to be a part of the ongoing effort to bring affordable, high-quality broadband to underserved communities. HB 3148 will help us continue to serve Oregonians who need it most, and we encourage this Committee to move the bill forward with a 'Do Pass' recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.