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House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade
Oregon State Capitol
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 3148

Chair Nguyen, Vice Chair Diehl, Vice Chair Isadore, and Members of the Committee:

Suma urges your support of HB 3148, Affordable Broadband: Expanding Access and Device Support in Oregon. This bill aims to fill the gap the federal government left open with the end to the Affordable Connectivity Program by expanding the already existing Oregon Lifeline Program.

Suma is a nonprofit based out of Portland focused on bridging the digital divide. We believe responsive technology investments and institutions can build frontline power to address climate change, poverty and racial injustice. We envision an inclusive technology landscape for frontline communities that are often exploited or overlooked by the tech sector. *This starts with communities having access to the internet at an affordable price*, because we know that without this basic necessity Oregonians will be left behind in this rapidly tech dependent world.

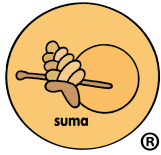
Suma was a part of the workgroup convened by Representative Marsh that looked into alternative paths Oregon could take in creating broadband affordability support for our frontline communities. Suma previously worked with Representative Marsh and other legislators to develop and pass HB3201 in 2023 which helped bring ~\$700M in federal broadband investments to Oregon.

Bill Overview

The federal Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) ended on June 1, 2024, leaving over 238,000 Oregon households without access to critical broadband subsidies. HB 3148 builds on the existing Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP), modernizing it into the renamed "Oregon Lifeline." This avoids creating a new program, thereby reducing costs, administrative complexity, and neutralizing federal reliance. The key components include:

- Increases Oregon Telephone/Broadband Subsidy: Provides the Public Utility Commission (PUC) the authority to increase the existing Oregon subsidy from \$10 to

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\$15/month. Along with the federal Lifeline support, customers will be eligible for a total subsidy of \$24.95.

- OTAP (soon to be Oregon Lifeline) is funded via a portion of the existing Residential Service Protection Fund (RSPF). The proposed subsidy increase can be provided within the existing RSPF structure and does not require a statutory change to fees.
- Device Assistance Benefit: Introduces a one-time benefit of \$100 to assist Oregon Lifeline participants in purchasing internet-enabled devices, such as laptops, desktops, or tablets, up to \$600 in value.
- PUC Flexibility: Ensures flexibility for the PUC to adjust the subsidy and device benefit to meet program needs and the needs of the other RSPF programs and system upgrades.

While HB 3148 will leave many urban Oregonians who were eligible for ACP behind due to lack of internet service provider participation in the Oregon Lifeline Program, there is an opportunity for all local small businesses to see a benefit. Local repair shops, like Free Geek, should be able to supply affordable technology with the help of the Device Assistance Benefit. Language through the rulemaking process encouraging a list of Oregon organizations that provide affordable technology hardware to support the Device Benefit Program introduced in this bill would be a great start.

We urge your support of HB 3148 to ensure Oregonians have access to affordable broadband and devices they need to be active participants in our modern economy. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony and for your service to thriving Oregon communities.

Sincerely,
Malena Lechon-Galdos, suma