



# Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

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March 14, 2025

To: Chair Nguyen, Vice-Chair Diehl, Vice-Chair Isadore, and members of the House Committee on Economic Development, Small Business, and Trade

From: Jennifer Hill-Hart, Policy & Program Director, Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB)

Re: Support for HB 3148 – Affordable Broadband

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The Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB) is a statewide nonprofit consumer advocacy organization developed by citizens' initiative in 1984. CUB represents the interests of Oregon households by advocating for utility regulations and policies that protect your wallet, including telecommunication service advocacy. To date, we have saved Oregon ratepayers over \$10 billion. **CUB requests your support for HB 3148.**

Last summer, the federal government ended the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), leaving over 238,000 Oregon households without access to critical broadband internet assistance. This program provided up to \$30 per month for high-speed internet, \$75 for those living on tribal lands, and offered a one-time \$100 benefit for purchasing devices like computers. Without assistance, many Oregonian families will lose access to affordable internet.

Luckily, for Oregonians our state is in a unique space of already providing our own assistance programs. With HB 3148, the current Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (OTAP), existing assistance will increase to up to \$24.95 per month when combined with remaining federal programs. A one-time benefit of \$100 will also be added for purchasing internet devices like computers or tablets.

HB 3148, the Affordable Broadband bill, builds upon an existing Oregon program to help replace assistance lost by the defunding of ACP funds by expanding the existing Oregon Telephone Assistance Program (to be renamed Oregon Lifeline). Access to affordable landline, voice internet, and cell phone service is a critical lifesaving necessity. Access to the internet is also an essential communication device and means of access to education and employment. CUB urges the Committee's support for HB 3148. Thank you for your consideration.