



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 23, 2023

Timothy G. Sekerak
Chief Clerk of the House
State Capitol Building
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Vote Explanation – HB 3201B

Chief Clerk Sekerak,

Please accept this explanation of my NAY vote on HB 3201B. Oregon has the opportunity to leverage federal dollars from the Federal Broadband Equity program to be distributed as grants for broadband expansion. However, this bill does not ensure the funds will be distributed equitably to rural parts of the state. Places in our state that have no internet or extremely slow internet. It could just as easily go to parts of our state that already have internet service at good speeds to make them even faster leaving others behind.

The bill states:

“To be eligible for a grant...an applicant must demonstrate that at least 80 percent of the broadband serviceable locations on a project service route are unserved or underserved.”

The definition in the bill of unserved will be based on “broadband mapping data published by the Federal Communications Commission or the State of Oregon.”

However, the federal maps are based on carrier information not independent research, and the State of Oregon map is based on a survey that was done by a recently formed portion of Business Oregon, but not vetted for accuracy. Local counties such as those in Polk, Marion and Yamhill have already been working on their own independent maps to determine where services are lacking and how the funds might be best allocated. This bill will exclude that locally collected data, which is the most accurate data available.

Until we can use locally collected data to access these funds and make sure they get to all corners of the state, I must be a no. We need to get access to all Oregonians, not just elevate those that may already have internet access.

For that reason, I was a no today.

Sincerely,

Anna Scharf
State Representative – HD 23