

JANEEN SOLLMAN
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 30



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 26, 2020

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

RE: Vote Explanation for Senate Bill 1603

Dear Chief Clerk Sekerak,

Access to broadband service should be available for all Oregonians and not be based simply on where you happen to live in the state. Broadband service should be considered a part of our critical infrastructure. It is of the utmost importance in our world today, especially in keeping rural Oregonians connected.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, access to fast and reliable internet service is a vital necessity for a plethora of reasons: Students across the state need access for their online education. Patients and health care providers need to conduct telehealth appointments. Access helps Oregonians stay abreast of the latest news and updates regarding the disease and the current events in a rapidly changing world. Currently, many Oregonians, including many of our rural communities, find themselves being left out of having access to high speed internet or even having access to any service at all.

I support SB 1603. It will help modernize and inject overdue fairness into the Oregon Universal Service Fund (OUSF) statutes while dedicating long-term, reliable funding for broadband investment in rural Oregon communities that are too often ignored. This bill will reduce the current surcharge for landline customers from 8.5% to 6% or less, cap the OUSF surcharge at 6% and will cap the overall size of the OUSF at \$28 million. It will additionally allocate \$5 million per year to expand broadband investment, including funding for the Oregon Broadband Office, technical assistance, planning, and infrastructure. It will also make it easier for communities to access federal grants as many of them have a matching requirement.

All Oregonians need and deserve access to broadband service. It is our responsibility to ensure this equity for all Oregonians, to provide stable funding for continued improvements to the critical infrastructure and to see that access is made available to all. The need for this investment is real. We need to be better prepared to handle emergency situations as they come our way in our future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janeen Sollman". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Representative Janeen Sollman

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