



STANDING UP TO POWERFUL INTERESTS

NEWS RELEASE

Contact
Charlie Fisher,

REPAIR SAVES FAMILIES MONEY AND PROTECTS THE ENVIRONMENT

“Right to Repair Act,” HB 2698, would make it easier for Oregonians to fix their consumer electronics and appliances

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With home electronics in heavy use during the ongoing pandemic, a [new analysis by OSPIRG estimates](#) that Oregon households could save \$330 per year by repairing their electronics on their own or going to independent repair shops, according to the report’s analysis. This adds up to a total savings of \$544 million across the state. This number may seem staggering, but so is how much we spend on new devices. As of 2019, American households spend approximately \$1,480 annually purchasing new electronic products.

The “Right to Repair Act,” ([HB 2698](#)) introduced in the Oregon legislature earlier this month would make it easier for Oregonians to fix their consumer electronics by requiring manufacturers to make parts, tools, and repair manuals available to the general public.

Right to Repair will help to ensure that more Oregonians have access to affordable technology, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic when technology has become instrumental to our daily lives,” said State Rep. Janeen Sollman (HB 30 - Hillsboro), a chief sponsor of the bill, “It will reduce e-waste and climate pollution, will protect consumers and will help our small independent Main Street businesses, by offering them the opportunity to assist Oregonians at a local level”.

Repair is not only good financially, but is also better for our planet. When we replace our electronics, we retire our old devices to landfills where they can leak such toxic heavy chemicals as [lead, mercury and cadmium](#). With American families generating about [176 pounds](#) of electronic waste each year, Americans are big contributors to the [fastest growing waste stream](#) in the world.

“Repair provides us with an opportunity to breathe new life into our old and broken devices,” said OSPIRG State Director, Charlie Fisher, “Instead of buying new gadgets every time our old ones give us trouble, we should turn to our communities to meet our repair needs. This approach is what’s best for both our society and our pocketbooks.”

Repair is critical to keeping our electronic products functional without breaking our budgets. Unfortunately, manufacturers often elbow out independent repair by [limiting access](#) to the tools,

parts and manuals we need to repair our devices, the report explains. In doing this, they limit the capacity for creating resilient communities that quickly recover from global disruptions.

"COVID-19 has really laid bare the digital inequities in our society," said Hilary Shohoney, the Executive Director of Free Geek, "At the same time that Free Geek started getting a record number of requests from members of the community who were experiencing the digital divide first hand, we also ran into the problem more than ever of not having the ability to repair devices that were coming to us. As we received more and more consumer grade devices, we realized that the schematics, tools, and parts were not available to us to repair the devices we were getting in."

Beyond aiding the environment and saving families' money, seeking out neighborhood repair shops also supports the local economy. Instead of looking to overseas manufacturers to carry out repairs, an increased reliance on local repair businesses can provide jobs for community members, decrease the out-of-pocket cost of repair, and increase the speed of service.

"We were troubled by manufacturer-imposed repair restrictions before the pandemic," said Sam Pastrick, advocacy manager for Citizens Utility Board of Oregon, "COVID-19 underscores the need for consumer fair repair rights, particularly for electronic communication devices needed for modern life."

Rosalynn Green, a board member with the Association of Oregon Recyclers, added: "We are fortunate to have an e-waste program in Oregon that enables residents to recycle computers, monitors, printers, keyboards, mice and TVs but it does not include tablets or phones and it doesn't address repair. E-waste is not going away and in the midst of COVID, the e-waste problem is only going to continue to grow. Right to Repair is the type of policy we need to harness the environmental and economic value of reusing electronic products by making repair more convenient and accessible to everyone."