



Oregon Citizens' Utility Board

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**Testimony of Samuel Pastrick
Regarding HB 2698 - Oregon Right to Repair Act
Before the House Committee on Business & Labor**

Chair Holvey, Vice Chairs Bonham and Grayber, members of the Committee:

My name is Samuel Pastrick. I'm the Advocacy Manager at Oregon Citizens' Utility Board (CUB). CUB is a membership-based 501(c)3 nonprofit consumer advocacy organization that represents and advocates for the broad interests of residential energy and telecommunications utility customers. I am pleased to submit this testimony **in support of HB 2698** - the Oregon Right to Repair Act - because ensuring that Oregonians have the right to repair the consumer electronic equipment they purchase will:

1. Help bridge Oregon's digital divide.
2. Reduce energy consumed for the purpose of manufacturing.
3. Reduce electronic waste.
4. Empower consumers and Oregon's small businesses community.

This testimony emphasizes the digital divide, which was an urgent policy concern before COVID-19, and has been further exposed by the pandemic. When we contemplate the digital divide, it's important to think in terms of three broad categories:

1. Affordable and reliable access to broadband service.
2. Affordable and reliable access to training resources.
3. Affordable and reliable access to internet-enabled devices.

Oregon has made some progress toward ensuring affordable and reliable access to broadband service by prioritizing public policies to that end. Public libraries and other public initiatives, as well as many nonprofit groups, work to support their communities with digital literacy training. And while community based organizations and Oregon small businesses do an admirable job of repairing and furnishing affordable and reliable devices to communities who may otherwise lack sufficient access due to cost constraints or other barriers, a major hurdle continues to stand in the way: **repair restrictions imposed by manufacturers that do not have the best interests of consumers and Oregon's small business community in mind.**

To the extent the Legislature continues to support public policies that promote affordable and reliable access to broadband service, this support should extend to affordable and reliable access to consumer electronic equipment such as phones, tablets, and computers. HB 2698 is tailored to address this need by ensuring that consumers and independent repair providers have reasonable access to the same physical parts, diagnostic tools, and manuals that manufacturers provide to affiliated repair providers. Nothing more and nothing less.

Empowering repair savvy consumers and community oriented small businesses with repair essentials will extend the useful lives of consumer electronics. This not only saves consumers money, it establishes a robust and unfettered marketplace for used, safe, and affordable digital devices. These devices will then make their way to Oregonians who may otherwise lack access.

Organizations like Free Geek out of Portland, Nextstep Recycling from Eugene, and Garten in Salem, already refurbish and distribute digital devices at low-or-no cost to community members. But they do so with significant limitations around their ability to access repair essentials from device manufacturers. **The Oregon Right to Repair Act will remove these repair limitations, promote small businesses, and save Oregon consumers money as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Oregon should remove the manufacturer's thumb from the scale of what ought to be a fair and reasonable marketplace for consumer electronic equipment. CUB urges the Committee's support for HB 2698 and swift movement toward passage.

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