

HOUSE RURAL COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 17, 2013

HR E, State Capitol, Salem Oregon

Members Present: Representative Clem, Representative McKeown, Representative Holvey, Representative Thatcher, Representative Unger

Member Excused: Representative Cameron, Representative Davis

ADOPTION OF COMMITTEE RULES

The Committee adopted the proposed committee [rules](#) dated September 17, 2013.

SIDEBOARDS FOR LOCAL IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

Dave Hunnicutt, President, Oregonians In Action Mr. Hunnicutt explained why and how local improvement districts (LID) are used to make infrastructure improvements. He expressed that LIDs are a tool that cities need but that sideboards are necessary. Currently, the LID statute is not specific as to how it is applied; it is left to cities to determine how to conduct the formation of an LID and how the total project costs are estimated. One example Mr. Hunnicutt shared of a potential sideboard was to limit the assessment to a certain percentage of the real market value of the property. Mr. Hunnicutt expressed his intention to work with the League of Oregon Cities and other interested cities to work on a proposal to address this issue during the February session.

Erin Doyle, Intergovernmental Relations Associate, League of Oregon Cities Ms. Doyle shared with the Committee that LIDs are an important financing tool for cities to use to build necessary infrastructure for properties that do not have things like sewer or sidewalks. She also explained the process for establishing a LID and what opportunities exist for landowners to participate.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Mark McMullen, State Economist, Office of Economic Analysis Mr. McMullen presented a rural economic update. His [presentation](#) showed a slight improvement in employment over the past year which he attributed to job growth in the housing and construction sector. He noted the damage to rural economies from the attrition of natural resource industries but said that there are some reasons to be optimistic about rural economies. He indicated that this is a timely issue because without action many rural economies will be in trouble. There is a symbiotic relationship between Portland and the rest of the state that is sometimes forgotten in these discussions.

Now is the time to act while there are still some young households in rural areas. These areas can end up in a negative cycle with infrastructure and work force and, as young skilled workforce

move away, rural communities aren't able to attract firms. At this point, workers are flowing to the valley; more than half of the people moving to Portland have been from Oregon.

BROADBAND AVAILABILITY

Chris Tamarin, Telecommunications Strategist, Business Oregon Mr. Tamarin shared an overview of broadband activities in Oregon. His [presentation](#) included information on the [broadband mapping project](#) which shows information on service data, provider info, and other important indicators. Currently, 74 percent of Oregon households have broadband in the home whereas only 68 percent of households nationwide have home access. According to the FCC's Broadband Progress Report only two percent of Oregon's population was reported as unserved as compared to the national average of eight percent. Funding for Broadband projects comes from multiple federal, state and private sources but at this time the largest contributions have been from the private sector.