



AGENDA COVER MEMO

Memorandum Date: April 30, 2025

Order Date: May 13, 2025

TO: Board of County Commissioners

DEPARTMENT: Technology Services

PRESENTED BY: Michael Finch, Chief Information Officer
Jason Harris, Community and Economic Development Manager

AGENDA ITEM TITLE: ACTION/ Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD)
Program Application Letters of Support

I. MOTION

Approve the letters of support to the four Internet Service Providers who are submitting applications to provide service to 17 school districts under the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

The Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), in partnership with Lane County, is committed to improving access to fast and affordable internet throughout the County. The Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment ([BEAD](#)) Program is a historic federal initiative aimed at closing the digital divide by investing in high-speed internet infrastructure across underserved and unserved areas of the United States. The Oregon Broadband Office (OBO) has been actively participating in this program, and the state is expected to receive nearly \$700 million dollars to expand broadband access—with a focus on rural, low-income, and tribal communities. The state opened the BEAD Selection process in February 2025, with a pre-qualification phase. Entities that have pre-qualified are now eligible to apply for grants by May 22, 2025.

BEAD awards are made only at the geographic scale of school districts. This means that any BEAD application must deliver service to every unserved or underserved location in each proposed school district. There are four applicants that must make a separate application for every school district area. Because neither LCOG nor Lane County are in a position to independently implement a BEAD project, both organizations seek to actively provide support to the four Internet Service Providers (ISP's). Two ISPs, Alyrica Networks and Pioneer Connect are proposing BEAD applications for only one school district area within Lane County (though both are making proposals for areas outside of Lane County as

well). ISPs DFN is proposing BEAD projects in eleven Lane County school district areas; HYAK is proposing BEAD projects in fifteen Lane County school district areas. In total, 4,335 unserved households and 2,309 underserved households. Lastly, the Board is asked to approve letters of support for seven unincorporated communities that will be served as part of the ISP's BEAD application. All four ISPs are reputable and experienced, have already met OBO's robust BEAD pre-qualification standards, and will have to meet the BEAD program's high standards for speed, service, technology, and affordability in their deployments.

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

On September 17, 2024, Lane County's Technology Services Director and Jacob Callister with Lane Council of Government provided a joint presentation to the Board on the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program.

In February 2025, LCOG and Lane County were successful in assisting Douglas Fast Net successfully apply for and receive a \$8.5 million Broadband Deployment Program award through the Oregon Broadband Office which will provide broadband internet service to 1,485 households in Lane and Douglas County.

B. Policy Issues

Not applicable.

C. Board Goals

This action is consistent with the strategic priorities contained in the Lane County 2022- 2024 Strategic Plan, including: Strategic priority number 3: Expand access to affordable broadband in Lane County.

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

Not applicable.

E. Health Implications

- Education
- Employment and livelihood
- Online health services
- Other services

The result of this action will direct the coordinated efforts to seek rural broadband funding that if successful will address the digital divide that exists in rural parts of Lane County that will provide access to education, employment, health and other

services through broadband internet that would have not been possible otherwise.

F. Analysis

The Lane Council of Governments (LCOG), in partnership with Lane County, is committed to improving access to fast and affordable internet throughout the County. The Oregon Broadband Office (OBO) has laid out a schedule of successive opportunities for engaged communities and providers to realize substantial improvements in broadband connectivity. The opportunities are predominantly federal stimulus programs that the State is tasked with administering. LCOG, in partnership with Lane County, has been working to prepare a strategic and coordinated response to these opportunities. The most significant program in scale, and the most highly anticipated program funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program is a federal grant program that aims to get all Americans online by funding partnerships between states or territories, communities, and stakeholders to build infrastructure where it is needed to increase adoption of high-speed internet.

The Oregon Broadband Office is requiring that BEAD applicants propose to build to all unserved and underserved locations across full school districts (District Grant Areas). OBO has designed this approach to enable efficient application review with minimal application overlap. It is also an objectively large geographic area, relative to most Internet Service Providers (ISPs) deployments. Because neither LCOG nor Lane County are in a position to independently implement a BEAD project, both organizations seek to actively provide support for ISP's whose vision, goals and track record have meaningful alignment with the County's vision and goals for broadband.

The four internet service providers (Alyrica Networks, Pioneer Connect, DFN and HYAK) who are submitting applications in which letters of support for each company is being requested. Two ISPs, Alyrica Networks and Pioneer Connect are proposing BEAD applications for only one school district area within Lane County (though both are making proposals for areas outside of Lane County as well). ISPs DFN is proposing BEAD projects in eleven Lane County school district areas; HYAK is proposing BEAD projects in fifteen Lane County school district areas. In total, 4,335 unserved households and 2,309 underserved households. Lastly, the Board is asked to approve letters of support for seven unincorporated communities that will be served as part of the ISP's BEAD application. All four ISPs are reputable and experienced, have already met OBO's robust BEAD pre-qualification standards, and will have to meet the BEAD program's high standards for speed, service, technology, and affordability in their deployments.

G. Alternatives/Options

1. Move to approve the letters of support.
2. Decline approval the letters of support.

3. Provide direction or feedback to staff regarding the letters of support.

IV. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends option 1.

V. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

The state opened BEAD Selection process in February 2025, with a pre-qualification phase. Entities that have pre-qualified are now eligible to apply for grants starting April 22, 2025 (and ending May 22, 2025).

VI. FOLLOW-UP

LCOG and Lane County staff plan provide updates to the Board on the BEAD application as the results of the selection process are released.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

1. Letters of Support



LANE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Heather Buch
Ryan Ceniga
Pat Farr
David Loveall
Laurie Trieger

May 13, 2025

Oregon Broadband Office
Attn: Krystal Stone & BEAD Review Committee
BEAD Program Coordinator
775 Summer St., NE, Suite 310
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program Letter of Support

Dear BEAD Review Committee,

The Lane County Board of Commissioners write to express our strong support for the Alyrica Networks' broadband deployment project in the Harrisburg School District, which seeks funding through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. We have paid close attention to BEAD and other federal broadband programs and recognize the critical importance of expanding broadband infrastructure to ensure equitable access to high-speed internet for all residents and businesses in our area.

Without affordable and reliable high-speed internet access Lane County households can't work from home, effectively attend school, access all the benefits of telehealth/telemedicine, connect as easily with government, and more. Robust and widespread broadband access is also essential for the economic development of our region. We are committed to advocating for the success of this and other BEAD projects in Lane County.

Alyrica has been actively serving residents of Lane County for a number of years and we appreciate the opportunity to support this important initiative. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information or assistance. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Lane County Board of Commissioners

David Loveall, Chair



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Heather Buch
Ryan Ceniga
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Laurie Trieger

May 13, 2025

Oregon Broadband Office
Attn: Krystal Stone & BEAD Review Committee
BEAD Program Coordinator
775 Summer St., NE, Suite 310
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program Letter of Support

Dear BEAD Review Committee,

Lane County wishes to formally express support for Internet Service Provider, DFN's, multiple applications to deploy internet connectivity to rural Lane County through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. DFN's proposed applications to bring affordable, high-speed internet to a total of 4,201 unserved and 2,171 underserved BEAD eligible locations in Eugene 4J, Creswell, Pleasant Hill, Lowell, South Lane, Springfield, Crow-Applegate-Lorane, Fern Ridge, Junction City, Bethel and Marcola District Grant Areas is substantial and will have a meaningful impact on so many Lane County Residents.

The work proposed by DFN supports the County's established vision and goals for broadband; including maximizing federal dollars in the County to bring fast, reliable and affordable internet to Lane County residents who lack it. The State Broadband Office's funds through BEAD presents a crucial opportunity to bring so many in Lane County across the digital divide.

DFN has proven to be a good partner to public entities in Lane County and have operated with a sound balance of sustainability and integrity.

We recognize the impact that BEAD broadband deployments will have in improving people's lives. We ask the Oregon Broadband Office to recognize this as you carefully evaluate BEAD applications in our region and across the state.

Sincerely,

Lane County Board of Commissioners

David Loveall, Chair



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775 Summer St., NE, Suite 310
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program Letter of Support

Dear BEAD Review Committee,

Lane County wishes to formally express support for Internet Service Provider, HYAK's, multiple applications to deploy internet connectivity to rural Lane County through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. HYAK's proposed applications to bring affordable, high-speed internet to a total of 4,332 unserved and 2,229 underserved BEAD eligible locations in Eugene 4J, Springfield, McKenzie, Oakridge, Creswell, Pleasant Hill, Lowell, South Lane, Crow-Applegate-Lorane, Fern Ridge, Junction City, Bethel and Marcola District Grant Areas is substantial and will have a meaningful impact on so many Lane County Residents.

The work proposed by HYAK supports the County's established vision and goals for broadband; including maximizing federal dollars in the County to bring fast, reliable and affordable internet to Lane County residents who lack it. The State Broadband Office's funds through BEAD presents a crucial opportunity to bring so many in Lane County across the digital divide.

HYAK has proven to be a good partner to public entities throughout Lane County having made a particularly meaningful impact in Western Lane County.

We recognize the impact that BEAD broadband deployments will have in improving people's lives. We ask the Oregon Broadband Office to recognize this as you carefully evaluate BEAD applications in our region and across the state.

Sincerely,

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Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program Letter of Support

Dear BEAD Review Committee,

The Lane County Board of Commissioners write to express our strong support for the Pioneer Connect broadband deployment project in the Blachly District Grant Area, which seeks funding through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. We have paid close attention to BEAD and other federal broadband programs and recognize the critical importance of expanding broadband infrastructure to ensure equitable access to high-speed internet for all residents and businesses in our area.

Without affordable and reliable high-speed internet access Lane County households can't work from home, effectively attend school, access all the benefits of telehealth/telemedicine, connect as easily with government, and more. Robust and widespread broadband access is also essential for the economic development of our region. We are committed to advocating for the success of this and other BEAD projects in Lane County.

Pioneer Connect has been actively serving residents of the Willamette Valley and surrounding areas for a few decades and we appreciate the opportunity to support this important initiative to get the remaining addresses in the Blachly District Grant Area. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information or assistance. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program Letter of Support

Dear BEAD Review Committee,

Lane County wishes to formally express support for both Internet service providers HYAK's and DFN's multiple applications to deploy internet connectivity to rural Lane County through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program. DFN and HYAK's proposed applications to bring affordable, high-speed internet underserved BEAD eligible locations within the ***Unincorporated Community of Cheshire***.

The work proposed by both HYAK and DFN supports the County's established vision and goals for broadband; including maximizing federal dollars in the County to bring fast, reliable and affordable internet to Lane County residents who lack it. The State Broadband Office's funds through BEAD presents a crucial opportunity to bring so many in Lane County across the digital divide.

Bothe DFN and HYAK have proven to be a good partner to public entities in Lane County and have operated with a sound balance of sustainability and integrity.

We recognize the impact that BEAD broadband deployments will have in improving the lives of people in unincorporated communities. We ask the Oregon Broadband Office to recognize this as you carefully evaluate BEAD applications in our region and across the state.

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The work proposed by both HYAK and DFN supports the County's established vision and goals for broadband; including maximizing federal dollars in the County to bring fast, reliable and affordable internet to Lane County residents who lack it. The State Broadband Office's funds through BEAD presents a crucial opportunity to bring so many in Lane County across the digital divide.

Both DFN and HYAK have proven to be a good partner to public entities in Lane County and have operated with a sound balance of sustainability and integrity.

We recognize the impact that BEAD broadband deployments will have in improving the lives of people in unincorporated communities. We ask the Oregon Broadband Office to recognize this as you carefully evaluate BEAD applications in our region and across the state.

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The work proposed by both HYAK and DFN supports the County's established vision and goals for broadband; including maximizing federal dollars in the County to bring fast, reliable and affordable internet to Lane County residents who lack it. The State Broadband Office's funds through BEAD presents a crucial opportunity to bring so many in Lane County across the digital divide.

Bothe DFN and HYAK have proven to be a good partner to public entities in Lane County and have operated with a sound balance of sustainability and integrity.

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The work proposed by both HYAK and DFN supports the County's established vision and goals for broadband; including maximizing federal dollars in the County to bring fast, reliable and affordable internet to Lane County residents who lack it. The State Broadband Office's funds through BEAD presents a crucial opportunity to bring so many in Lane County across the digital divide.

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