



May 3, 2021

Dear Senator Merkley,

On behalf of the Oregon Library Association, I am writing to respectfully request your support for the Build America's Libraries Act (S. 127).

Libraries are a crucial part of our nation's education and information infrastructure. In Oregon, there are 221 public library locations with a combined 2,185,373 square feet. These libraries provide vital services and have kept people connected during the pandemic by providing WiFi and loaned technology and support to provide a lifeline to those in need of access to health care, employment and educational advancement.

For example, the local internet service in the town of Williams was recently down for nearly two weeks. The local library branch of the Josephine Community Library was able to extend WiFi access to its parking lot so residents could complete essential business such as taking an online commercial driver's license test or order supplies for a home business.

Unfortunately, too many libraries in Oregon are hampered by outdated or inadequate infrastructure and facilities. In Williams, the library branch does not have running water, which makes it difficult to provide a safe working environment for staff. The library building in Coos Bay has structural damage beyond repair and the city is challenged to find needed funding for a new facility. In Lowell, the small community needs help with funding to renovate a recently purchased building to restart their library, which has been closed since 2018.

As Congress prepares to consider an effort to modernize our nation's infrastructure, libraries must not be left out.

We ask for your support for this effort to rebuild our library infrastructure by cosponsoring Build America's Libraries Act (S. 127). For more information, please contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Lasky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Lasky

Oregon Library Association President

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