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HB1199: Consumer Digital Repair Bill of Rights
House Committee on Business Affairs & Labor
March 25, 2021
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Dear Chairman Roberts, Vice Chair Sullivan, and members of the Business Affairs & Labor Committee:

I am writing to express our support for HB1199, the Consumer Digital Repair Bill of Rights .

iFixit is an international, open-source, online repair guide for everything. Our mission is to provide people with the knowledge they need to make their things work for as long as possible. We represent a global community of makers, tinkerers, fixers, and repair professionals. In 2020, the iFixit community helped almost 1 million Coloradans learn how to fix their stuff. We believe that everyone should have the right to repair, modify, and tinker with the things they own, and to access the repair services of their own choosing.

For our members—and American consumers more generally—the problems of being unable to repair their own products are vast and will continue to grow. Without access to service diagnostics, products will simply stop working as cloud services change or shut down. Without access to repair parts, consumers will have to dispose of and replace perfectly repairable products. It's prohibitive to expect individual owners, repair shops, refurbishers and recyclers to pay each manufacturer for authorized service information. And without that information, repair shops and recyclers won't be able to keep up with the vast diversity of electronics-enabled products on the market.

Our experience helping millions of people to fix things also shows that the best way to ensure safe repairs is to give people the information, parts, and tools they need to repair their devices safely.

Manufacturer-offered repair services have proven inadequate to meet the needs of device owners. When they're available (some manufacturers don't provide any repair services), they often require Coloradans to travel long distances, pay higher prices, wait out delays in shipping and repair, or limit the types of repairs available. The solution is to ensure that owners and independent repair providers have access to the information, parts, and tools needed to keep our devices operational.

The positive impacts of the HB1199 will be far-reaching. Electronics manufacturing strains the limits of our natural resources while usable products and device components are thrown into landfills instead of salvaged, fixed, and reused. By supporting HB1199 you would be helping

extend device lifetimes, keeping products operational longer. HB1199 will also help close the digital divide in our communities, providing access to expensive technologies to those in need who cannot afford to buy them new, and make sure all our communities have access to the technology needed for education, telemedicine, and all other aspects of our digital lives.

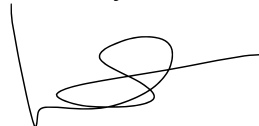
Using, repairing, and modifying modern products requires access to information, replacement parts, and specialized tools including service manuals, error codes, and diagnostic tools. In requiring manufacturers to provide fair access to these, HB1199 will provide much needed support to small and independent repair businesses, who struggle to compete against manufacturer-offered repair services, and support local job creation. A recent Illinois Economic Activity survey found that repairing electronics creates 13 times as many jobs as recycling it. For every 1000 tons of electronics, repair creates 200 jobs—and while manufacturers may outsource many of their jobs or move them abroad, repair jobs are predominantly local.

Opponents' claims that their warranty services would be impacted by HB1199 should be viewed with skepticism, as the federal Magnuson-Moss Warranty Act prohibits manufacturers from voiding a warranty merely because a consumer repaired a device themselves, used an independent repair provider, or used third party replacement parts. Indeed, in 2018, the Federal Trade Commission sent warning letters to companies represented by TechNet and the Entertainment Software Alliance for unlawfully asserting to consumers that their warranty would be voided unless they used the companies' authorized service providers or replacement parts.

I'm grateful for your efforts to move HB1199 forward. Please let me know if you have any questions or if there is any additional information I can provide.

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kerry Maeve Sheehan', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Kerry Maeve Sheehan
U.S. Policy Lead, iFixit

