

Devin Malanaphy

Testimony in SUPPORT of LD1908

Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development

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Good morning Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is Devin Malanaphy, I live in Portland, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify today in support of LD1908. In my day job I'm a computer systems engineer developing residential battery backed solar energy systems, and in my free time I like to tinker with electronics.

It was this tinkering, and a desire to get more connected to my local community, that led to me getting involved in a Repair Cafe in Portland that I now help organize. At these monthly free community events, folks come in with a vast variety of things to be repaired. A crew of volunteer repairers helps fix clothing, bicycles, shoes, sewing machines, as well as all manner of electronics, which is where I come in. Kitchen appliances, laptops, radios, vacuum cleaners, RC cars, cameras. You name it, I'll try and sometimes succeed, to fix it. But we can't fix everything. Newer, "smarter" devices are often beyond our capabilities and have to be turned away, due in large part to the fact that they are, from our perspective, black boxes.

A few months ago, we had a string of broken KitchenAid stand mixers come through. One mixer from the 90s needed to be re-greased, another from the early 2000s needed a small electrical component replaced. Both were relatively straightforward fixes, due in part to the simplicity of the devices. Then, a third, much newer model from just a few years ago came in. Like the other two, it showed no signs of life. Upon careful disassembly we discovered no clear failure, just a central circuit board with hundreds of tiny components. A google search yielded no publicly available diagnostic procedure, or any evidence that first party replacement parts were available.

This story is becoming more and more common at the repair cafe. With minimal if any troubleshooting documentation to go off for newer, more complex devices, our hands are tied. Even if we were able to determine a root cause or broken component, there's no guarantee that we'd be able to find a replacement part, or safely perform a replacement without the right tools.

LD1908 has the potential to remedy that. With access to better documentation to troubleshoot issues, tools to disassemble and diagnose, and parts to replace, our ability to actually repair peoples newer electronics, or at least confidently refer them to an independent repair shop, would be drastically improved.

Thank you.