



**HB 281 Broadband Expansion Program (Carfagna)  
Proponent Testimony (written only)  
Ohio Municipal League & Ohio Township Association  
December 12, 2017**

On behalf of our members, we are writing to offer our support for House Bill 281, which would establish the residential broadband expansion program within the Development Services Agency (DSA) to award matching grants for last mile broadband expansion in municipal corporations and townships.

Our associations continue to advocate for reliable and affordable high speed internet (or broadband access) for all of Ohio. Access to the internet is rapidly becoming a necessity for Ohioans in their daily lives; yet, access to such continues to be an issue for many local governments and their residents. Without the internet, Ohioans don't have access to educational or employment opportunities. Internet access can also bring economic development to an area, either through e-commerce or by attracting millennials who would otherwise not choose to work or live in a community without internet access.

House Bill 281 would bring internet access to forgotten or overlooked parts of Ohio communities by establishing a "last mile" broadband expansion program. Together, a municipality or township and the county in which it is located, would fund two-thirds of the project costs to bring broadband to an unreached part of a community. The rest of the project would be funded by state funds awarded through DSA. This financing structure provides local governments the opportunity bring internet access to parts of their communities when it would otherwise be cost-prohibitive. This permissive legislation will allow communities to join together to help approximately thirty percent of Ohioans to realize the benefits of connectivity to broadband infrastructure.

Ohioans, regardless of what area of the state in which they reside, should not be deprived of the benefits and opportunities offered by the internet simply because of where they live. We appreciate Rep. Carfagna's recognition of the need for last-mile broadband access and for creating a solution to the existing cost barrier.

The Ohio Municipal League and the Ohio Township Association strongly support House Bill 281 and urge the House Finance Committee to favorably report the bill to the full House for a vote. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions or concerns about our position, please do not hesitate to contact either of us.

Respectfully,

Kent Scarrett  
Executive Director  
Ohio Municipal League

Matthew J. DeTemple  
Executive Director  
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