

February 5, 2015

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee,

My name is Mary Pepperney. I am a senior citizen who has lived in Ashtabula County for over 40 years. I am writing this letter in support of House Bill 378.

Advanced telecommunications are vital to the future of our state and our community. Broadband has transformed how Americans do business, interact with government, learn about social services, pursue educational opportunities and be entertained. As our economy becomes more reliant on the internet for growth, rural Ashtabula should not be left behind. Without broadband and high-speed internet, our rural community will find it difficult to grow economically and to provide on-going quality of life. Teachers, health care providers, farmers, retailers and residents must have access to broadband if they want to impact the economic health of our county and maintain a presence in the community. Connecting to the internet is crucial in allowing our citizens to buy items and access services that may not be available locally, while also allowing them to market their own goods and services to a larger population. Investment in broadband internet access will lead to a more educated and competitive community as well as granting access to a larger world for isolated and homebound seniors in Ashtabula County.

Broadband internet has become as essential to educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and businesses as good teachers, good healthcare providers, good roads, efficient energy and pure water. Lack of broadband access can impede future economic development in Ashtabula County. As noted above, quality, reliable internet service impacts many members of our community, including our children, our future community leaders. High speed internet will provide a tool to help our young people access the technology needed for their future success. Distance should be no obstacle to learning or the ability of individuals to connect with each other.

“Broadband has the power to transform society and nowhere is that power greater than rural communities..... Broadband technology means that rural Americans can reach and be reached by the rest of the country and the rest of the world without ever having to leave home.”
(Craig Mundie, Chief Technical Officer of Advanced Strategies and Policy, Microsoft Corp.
Congressional Testimony, 2006.)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Bill. My hope is that high speed broadband implementation will soon be a reality for the citizens of Ohio, and Ashtabula County.

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