

# COMMA

Central Ohio Mayors & Managers Association

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January 30, 2018

The Honorable Louis Blessing III, Chair  
Ohio House Government Accountability & Oversight Committee  
77 South High Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Blessing:

I am writing on behalf of the Central Ohio Mayors and Managers Association (COMMA) in support of House Bill 478.

COMMA represents the communities of Bexley, Canal Winchester, Columbus, Delaware, Dublin, Gahanna, Grandview Heights, Grove City, Lancaster, Hilliard, Marysville, New Albany, Pickerington, Powell, Reynoldsburg, Upper Arlington, Westerville, Whitehall and Worthington. The populations of these communities total 1,365,696 people.

One of the reasons that COMMA was formed was to collaborate with other state and regional entities providing leadership in cooperative efforts and initiatives. We have been very successful in collaborating on behalf of our membership and finding common ground among the large and small cities that we represent.

This new legislation is a great example of this type of collaboration. HB 478 is designed to replace an amendment, which was included in Senate Bill 331 and passed in December, 2016. Cities throughout the State of Ohio, including those represented by COMMA, expressed their opposition to that amendment, and, following passage of Senate Bill 331, filed lawsuits.

At that time, Speaker Cliff Rosenberger stepped in and asked that the cities and municipal leadership groups meet with the telecom industry to try to resolve their differences. More than 90 cities representing regions throughout the state, including our COMMA membership, began meeting in April 2017 to determine what needed to be changed in order for the legislation to be amenable to our constituencies. Once we had ironed out areas of agreement among the cities, we began meeting with the industry to ensure that the new language would be satisfactory for their business models.

Those meetings began in September 2017. At the outset, cities affirmed that we fully support the deployment of new technology in our communities, but also have to protect the interests of our constituents and our investments in our own infrastructure.

The new bill has been carefully crafted to reflect compromise on both sides, and COMMA fully supports House Bill 478 as written.

We urge your support of this bill that will help preserve our cities while moving Ohio forward with the latest technology.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ben Kessler", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ben Kessler, City of Bexley Mayor &  
COMMA Chairman