



House Finance Committee
House Bill 13 – Proponent Written Testimony

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Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit written proponent testimony in support of House Bill 13. HB 13 would establish the Residential Broadband Expansion Program to provide matching grants to local communities for last mile broadband expansion.

Representatives Carfagna and O'Brien noted in their testimony that upwards of one million Ohioans lack broadband access due to where they reside. CCAO shares the sponsors' concern that too many Ohioans fail to realize the benefits of connectivity due to limitations of the extent of broadband infrastructure. To that end, CCAO has addressed the issue in its legislative platform which reads in pertinent part as follows:

“Access to broadband is critical for the development of technology, enhancement of educational opportunities, delivery of healthcare and growth in commerce. Yet only 71 percent of Ohioans have access to broadband service in their homes. Ohio needs to aggressively promote access, adoption and use of broadband throughout Ohio. The General Assembly must be committed to examining the barriers that limit access to broadband and promoting sound policies that encourage access to broadband in order to stay competitive in the national economy.”

HB 13 establishes a state and local partnership where townships and municipalities could sponsor individual projects to provide broadband service to specific eligible areas of homes. On a permissive basis, the bill envisions communities sponsoring a share of the last mile infrastructure costs with possible support from the county. Provided the sponsoring community and potential county are willing to provide two-thirds of the project cost, the local governments would submit an agreement and application to the Development Services Agency which would be required to fund the remainder of the project costs subject to the limited of the appropriated state funds.



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CCAO thanks Representatives Carfagna and O'Brien for their sponsorship of HB 13. CCAO also thanks the committee for its consideration of our supportive testimony on this important piece of legislation.