



*Forging a partnership between farmers and consumers.
•Working together for Ohio's farmers•*

**House Finance Committee
HB 13 Proponent Testimony
Jenna Beadle, Director of State Policy
June 19, 2019**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera and members of the House Finance Committee, on behalf of Ohio Farm Bureau, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 13.

Development of broadband infrastructure and increased access for high speed internet is a priority issue for Ohio Farm Bureau. Our farmers rely on it for precision agriculture technology and information about their farms. As farmers are constantly being called upon to help solve Ohio's water quality issues, it is imperative for them to have the technology they need to utilize conservation practices. In addition to best management practices, farmers need the internet to comply with many state and federal regulations as most agencies have transitioned to electronic filing.

It might sound cliché, but our lives are becoming more dependent on technology. Whether it be for education, business, healthcare, or entertainment, our need for reliable internet access is very important. With new broadband access comes increased economic and educational opportunities and development. Without it, Ohioans in these unserved and underserved areas will continue to fall behind. According to a study by The Ohio State University, 1 million Ohioans —11.7% of its residents — are unserved or underserved by reliable, high-speed internet simply because of where they live.

There isn't a quick and easy solution to expanding access to broadband; funding is certainly the biggest challenge developers face, and it is evident all funding sources need to be considered as part of a comprehensive solution. Whether it be public investment, private-public partnerships, federal grants, or cooperatives, Ohio needs to engage all resources available as it attempts to deploy broadband into the unserved areas of the state. HB 13 is an important beginning step to address the funding needed for additional broadband infrastructure but a much larger funding mechanism is needed to connect households in rural Ohio.

The internet is no longer a luxury item as many aspects of society depend upon connectivity to sustain healthy communities.

Thank you again for the opportunity to share Farm Bureau's support for HB 13, and I am happy to answer any questions.