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209 East State Street • Columbus, Ohio 43215-4309
Phone: 614-221-5627 • Fax: 614-221-6986
Toll Free: 888-757-1904 • www.ccao.org

Cheryl Subler, Executive Director

House Finance Committee
Substitute House Bill 13 – Proponent Written Testimony

Adam Schwiebert
Policy Analyst

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Co-Chairs Oelslager and Callender, 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 Substitute House Bill 13.

CCAO has long supported expanded broadband access. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has only heightened the need for reliable and affordable high-speed internet. The pandemic has forced millions of Ohioans to rely on broadband connectivity for access to education, commerce, telehealth, social connectedness and countless other functions. Unfortunately, lack of access to broadband has left too many Ohioans excluded from these arenas.

Substitute House Bill 13 establishes a residential broadband expansion program that will make an impactful difference for Ohioans currently lacking broadband access. The \$20 million appropriation included in the substitute bill is a substantial investment that will help expand access to many Ohioans. The substitute bill also establishes a direct application process through the Ohio Department of Commerce for grant awards. Local governments remain engaged through the process by requesting the Department publish a list of local areas that lack broadband access. Local governments also may invest in expansion projects to encourage local buy-in and help turn proposed expansions into reality.

CCAO remains supportive of House Bill 13 and we thank Reps. Carfagna and O'Brien for their efforts to address Ohio's broadband challenge. Expanding broadband access to all Ohioans will not happen overnight, but through well-crafted legislation such as House Bill 13, a meaningful difference can be made that will positively impact many Ohioans. We urge the House Finance Committee to favorably report Sub. House Bill 13 to the full House for a vote.

Thank you for your time and consideration of CCAO's testimony. Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact CCAO.



Fax: 614-220-0209
www.corsa.org



Fax: 614-229-4588
www.cebco.org



Fax: 614-221-6986
www.ccao.org