



House Finance Committee
House Bill 13
Proponent Testimony
May 27, 2020

Chair Oelslager, Vice-Chair Callendar, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on House Bill 13. We would like to thank Representative Carfagna and Representative O'Brien for their work and diligence on House Bill 13.

By way of background, the Ohio Rural Development Alliance (ORDA) is an organization of Ohio's Rural Transportation Planning Organizations and other interested and dedicated to economic parity for Ohio's rural communities. ORDA's members advocate for policies that create sustainable and diverse economic growth and prosperity in their communities. One of our goals is to ensure that Ohio is positioned to capitalize on opportunities in the regional economy. Specifically, ORDA works on legislative and policy changes to ensure broadband access to 100% of the unserved areas because it will provide economic opportunities to rural Ohio communities.

ORDA believes House Bill 13 creates another mechanism to help rural communities receive access to broadband. ORDA appreciates the recent changes to the bill, which includes increasing the speed required on the definition of broadband service. Many communities may have access to what is often slow and clunky internet, but customers still are unable to utilize it properly to download items for their child's homework, access work from home platforms or stream telehealth services - all activities that households are attempting now during the current the pandemic. Many schools in the rural Ohio provided paper packets for students' families to pick up each week because they could not provide instruction over a streaming service to those students due to the lack of internet in students' homes. The current pandemic has intensified the lack of equal service across the state and will only harm certain communities more in the future as current changes due to the pandemic remain as the new normal.

ORDA also supports House Bill 13 because it requires the application for the program grant to include the residential addresses in the unserved, where service will be available following the completion of the project. Many federal grant programs only require census blocks to be labeled as served rather than the individual addresses. Therefore, one household in a large census block may be able to receive access to broadband after federal grand funding is released and the other households remain a broadband desert. ORDA believes it is important for mapping purposes to know which households have access because it paints a clearer picture of the access disparity in rural Ohio.



Thank you for the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on House Bill 13. We urge for favorable passage of House Bill 13. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us via phone or e-mail.