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May 19, 2015

Chairman Bill Beagle  
Senate Finance Workforce Subcommittee  
Ohio Senate  
Statehouse  
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Beagle,

I am writing today on behalf of the 42 member companies and more than 100 Associate Members of the Ohio Telecom Association in support of the telecom provisions of Substitute House Bill 64. The OTA applauds Governor Kasich for his leadership in including telecom reform provisions in his budget proposal to ensure that consumers and businesses in Ohio benefit from investment in new technologies connected with the transition to internet protocol (IP) networks. Most importantly, the Governor's proposal ensures that no consumers will be without reasonable and comparatively priced voice service while the PUCO works with the FCC and providers on the transition.

This is an important public policy statement that will remove the barriers to further investment by Ohio's local telephone companies in the telecom network of the future. Ohio consumers are rapidly leaving monopoly-era telephone services and migrating to cutting-edge, cost-efficient broadband Internet Protocol- (IP) based wired and wireless services and platforms. It is these IP platforms that provide the most advanced technological services available, giving Ohioans access to more, faster products.

OTA companies invest more than one billion dollars each year in Ohio's telecom infrastructure. Given the capital investment requirements and the time it will take to complete the transition to all-IP services, Ohio should identify and remove state laws and regulations that serve to delay or deny to Ohioans the full benefits of an all-IP and broadband world that consumers demand.

Several important changes were made in the Governor's proposal from previous versions of legislation passed by both the House and the Senate. Additional safeguards have been added that would enable Ohioans to keep their traditional phone service if they choose.

Let me quickly mention a few benefits to this bill:

- It is essential for Education in Ohio - IP broadband technologies and services allow students to engage in distance learning and have greater access to Internet-based technologies within classrooms and even earn college credits and degrees online.
- It is essential for Economic Development in our state. Research from the PCIA - The Wireless Infrastructure Association - indicates that mobile broadband investments projected for 2013-2017 will generate as much as \$1.2 trillion in economic growth that is critical for Ohio.
- The bill is important for Health Care – Remote monitoring via telemedicine will save rural Americans time and money on healthcare related travel. Uploading and sharing of patient details between care providers and directly with patients over wireless technologies is essential in today's digital world.
- The bill is important for Seniors – Home health technologies will support the ability of seniors to stay in their homes longer and have improved communication with care providers and loved ones. Studies indicate Internet-based telemedicine and in-home health monitoring services can reduce the frequency and duration of hospital visits, potentially saving seniors as much as \$927 billion in health care costs over the 25 years, according to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

This approach will bring continued investment in the network of the future in Ohio, while ensuring appropriate oversight by the Public Utilities Commission. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Charles R. Moses  
President