



OHIO HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION
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December 11, 2017

The Honorable Rick Carfagna
Ohio House of Representatives
Vern Riffe Center for Government and the Arts
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Representative Carfagna,

On behalf of the Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association (OHLA), and more than 1,500 licensed hotel properties employing 35,000 professionals across our state, I would like to express our industry's support of House Bill 281, and your efforts to establish the Residential Broadband Expansion Program.

Finding ways to ensure broadband service to underserved areas has been a consistent challenge for many businesses in Ohio's unique lodging market, which includes a growing number of bed & breakfast operations in rural areas.

Establishing a state and local partnership where townships and municipalities could support individual projects to provide broadband service to specific eligible areas that could include bed & breakfasts and other small, independent lodging operators would greatly benefit many of Ohio's leading tourism communities, and by extension, Ohio's entire travel economy.

Each year, a growing number of travelers are seeking out Ohio's unique experiences and natural beauty, but they still expect and even demand access to communication services that only broadband access can provide, from high-speed internet access to check emails, to using smart phone applications, to enjoying video streaming services while travelling.

HB 281 takes an important step forward in providing more broadband access where it is needed. OHLA supports this legislation, and your efforts. We pledge to work with you, and others working for solutions to help expand broadband, during all discussions in the legislature and in our communities.

Sincerely,

Joe Savarise
Executive Director