

Good afternoon, Chair Oelslager, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Skindell and members of the Senate Finance Committee.

My name is Nancy Richison, and I am the Government and International Relations Manager for the City of Dublin. I also am a member of the Global Institute for the Study of the Intelligent Community, which is supported by the City of Dublin.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 225 to create the Ohio Broadband Development Grant Program.

The ICF Institute is a research and resource organization, created to expand the world's knowledge of Intelligent Communities using six indicators developed by the New York-based Intelligent Community Forum. The Intelligent Community indicators are: broadband, knowledge workforce, innovation, digital equality, sustainability and advocacy.

Right now, the Intelligent Community Forum has gathered communities from around the globe for an international summit in London, England, where the 2018 Intelligent Community of the Year will be named from a field of Top 7 Intelligent Communities.

You may recall that Columbus was named the global Intelligent Community of the Year in 2015. The following year, Columbus competed against 77 cities nationwide to win the Smart City Challenge and received \$40 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation, and is currently being considered as a second headquarters' location for Amazon. Clearly, Columbus has mastered the indicators, and the follow-on dollars and desirability are a direct result.

The City of Dublin, a Top 7 Intelligent Community finalist in 2010 and 2011, can trace a \$40 million return on investment and 14,000 new jobs directly to our broadband network. This network is part of the 33 Smart Mobility Corridor, crossing three counties and connecting the cities of Dublin and Marysville to Honda's North American campus and beyond.

No U.S. cities have been among the Top 7 finalists since the win by Columbus in 2015.

However, Ohio has had more Smart 21 semi-finalists and Top 7 finalists than any other state in the country. Among those communities receiving recognition in the program are Dublin, Columbus and Cleveland. This past year, one of the ICF Institute participants, Hudson, Ohio, was the only city in the U.S. to make the ICF's Smart21 semi-finalist list.

The ICF Institute's vision is to create an Intelligent Ohio. We realize that we're not truly connected, until we're all connected ... from Athens to Zanesville. That's why the Institute is striving to reach all areas of the state. This bill will go a long way in achieving that goal.

This legislation will enable middle- and last-mile connections and assist the telecommunications industry in its deployment of much-needed technology.

It will provide grants to extend broadband service to unserved areas of Ohio, and provide advanced, high-quality telecommunication services to citizens throughout the state.

It will attract businesses because of our talented workforce. It will make our schoolchildren competitive with their peers, and keep our college graduates here in Ohio.

Broadband is not just infrastructure; It is a vital utility critical to the well-being of everyone in the Buckeye State.

Thank you again for allowing me to offer proponent testimony on behalf of Senate Bill 225.