

May 31, 2018

Chairman Scott Oelslager
Ohio State Finance Committee
Senate Building
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Chairman Oelslager,

I am writing to you today in support of Senate Bill 225 to create the Ohio Broadband Development Grant Program. This legislation would provide financial support to vital broadband investment and infrastructure expansion in the vast areas of Ohio that remain unserved, particularly the 32-county Appalachian region of Ohio.

Many other states have successfully enacted similar legislation to increase investment of this vital infrastructure. I am concerned that Ohio will continue to fall behind if such legislation is not adopted very soon.

I run an impact investing firm, Sugarbush Valley Impact Investments, which develops SE Ohio startups in renewable energy, zero waste and local foods. Every single entrepreneur and company we work with cites lack of broadband access as their number one barrier to growing and keeping their business in the region. Broadband is the engine of economic growth – business operations, marketing, sales, staff recruitment and retention all depend on it.

There are incredible inventions and business concepts coming out of our region every day. Help us help them move from idea to innovation, from an entrepreneur to an enterprise offering sustainable jobs.

Broadband is no longer a luxury, rather a necessity for all of Ohio's citizens. Lack of access to this important infrastructure translates to lack of access to economic opportunities, educational advancement, informed healthcare, and business development.

I enthusiastically support the passage of SB225 so that all Ohio residents have the opportunity to thrive in today's digital landscape.

Sincerely,



Eli Flournoy
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