

Dear Chairman Oelslager,

c/o: allie.harris@ohiosenate.gov

I am writing you today in support of Senate Bill 225 to create the Ohio Broadband Expansion Grant Program. This legislation would provide last dollar support to encourage vital broadband investment and infrastructure expansion in the vast areas of Ohio that remain unserved.

Many other states have already successfully enacted similar legislation, and I am concerned that Ohio is falling further and further behind.

Mt Perry Foods has long been one of the largest employers in Perry County. We are currently paying more than \$4000/month for cellular broadband internet service. We are not technically in a cellular broadband service area so we have two cellular antennae on our roof connected to signal boosters and a load balancing router. Spring and summer time cause frequent service interruptions. We believe this is due to the foliage. The largest data plan Verizon offers business customers is 100 GB. We use considerably more than that even with strict filters that limit access to only business-related content. Our business is completely dependent on an internet connection. We receive most of our orders, do our invoicing, and receive remittance notices via EDI. Our quality department uses it to train employees in food safety. We also use the connection for offsite backup services, route planning, marketing, in addition to normal business communications. Our usage has steadily increased and will only continue to do so to keep pace with the market.

For years we have tried to get a more reliable and more affordable internet connection. The telephone service provider in our area is AT&T but they only offer dial up to our location. Windstream has DSL service in Mt Perry about one mile away, but they are not permitted to service us due to regulatory considerations. We just completed a site survey with Spectrum and the cost to get us a fiber connection is \$375,000. They don't offer cable service in our area. We have had several WISPs do site surveys but due to the surrounding terrain none were willing to service us.

I'm sure you understand broadband is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity. Ohio's businesses need it to grow and compete in a global market. Our business is at a point where the cost of our internet connection is a major concern. We have customers who would like access to our production and quality data but our connection is too

inconsistent and costly to permit this. For us it's not a question of needing a better more cost-effective connection for growth. We need it to continue to service the customers we currently have. Without it I'm afraid we'll have to move or worse, resulting in the loss of many rural jobs.

I enthusiastically support passage of SB225 to ensure that Ohio residents and businesses can not only survive but prosper in the Digital Economy.

Sincerely,

Jesse Parkinson

Mt Perry Foods