



June 4, 2018

Chairman Scott Oelslager  
Ohio State Finance Committee  
Senate Building  
1 Capitol Square, 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

The Holmes County Economic Development Council strives to strengthen the business environment in Holmes County. One of the critical components of a thriving business environment is access to reliable high-speed broadband internet service. Because our community currently lacks such access, our businesses are at a competitive disadvantage.

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,

Mark E. Leininger,  
Executive Director