

March 13, 2018

Chairman Beagle, Ranking Member Williams, and Members of the Senate Public Utilities Committee:

Founded in 1884, the Columbus Chamber of Commerce is the leading voice of business within the 11-county Columbus Region, with more than 1,500 members employing over 500,000 workers.

The Columbus Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Agenda (PPA), approved by the Government Affairs Steering Committee and full board of directors, includes as a priority the responsible and efficient deployment of the 5th generation of wireless technology (5G). Small cells are a crucial part of upgrading our existing wireless network to accommodate the exponential growth of data that will be enabled by 5G. Another tenet of the Chamber's PPA states our opposition to unnecessary regulations which increase cost, reduce consumer choice, hamper innovation and limit technological advancement and availability. Therefore, we urge favorable consideration of legislation to create a fair and consistent regulatory framework that will help to advance small cell technology in Ohio.

The roll out of 5G is hotly anticipated here in Columbus, designated as the country's "Smart City" by the U.S. Department of Transportation. We are a testing ground for smart mobility, infrastructure, and new technologies, including the Smart Columbus Operating System, which ingests, aggregates, fuses and disseminates data, and also provides access to analytics; autonomous and connected vehicles; and a multimodal trip planning application and smart mobility hubs that aim to address the region's first mile-last mile concerns and provide greater access to jobs, healthcare, and opportunity. The absence of uniform statewide governance on this issue has caused delay and unpredictability for the wireless companies working diligently to deploy small cell technology, and for the various companies working on these projects, committed to making Columbus a smart city, and planning their business model around innovative technologies.

Further, Central Ohio is the fastest growing region in the state. Increased network capacity is necessary to accommodate economic development and the projected population growth, which is on pace to add upwards of a million people by 2050.¹ With the integration of technology now ubiquitous in the workplace, tech positions across all industry sectors are at the forefront of the anticipated job expansion. An upgraded network is essential to ensure our businesses, consumers, and residents have fast, reliable access to the mobile networks they want and need.

We are supportive of changes made in the House to address concerns by industries and Chamber members that may have been unintentionally negatively impacted by this entirely new statutory scheme. The Chamber urges the Senate to favorably advance H.B. 487 to put in place a regulatory structure that will facilitate smooth deployment of 5G.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Holly Gross
Vice President, Government Relations

¹ <http://getinsight2050.org/>