

Senate Public Utilities Committee
HB 478 -- Crown Castle Testimony
March 22, 2018

Chairman Beagle, Vice Chairman McColley, Ranking Member Williams, members of the committee, my name is Keith Storsin, construction manager at Crown Castle. I work in Crown Castle's Columbus office and I am a resident of Canton. I was born in Canton and besides my 8 years of service in the Navy, I have lived there my whole life. I have worked in the telecommunications industry for 17 years.

For the last four years, I have worked for Crown Castle supporting its network development in Ohio. We have over 5,000 employees nationwide which includes 41 in Ohio. Our Ohio team has grown tenfold since I started, and may double in the next five years. It is my job to manage our crews in the field, ensuring that all work is done safely in compliance with all necessary permits. As the last owner of our assets, Crown Castle strives to be a good long-term partner in the communities we serve. As the local face of Crown Castle, I make sure everything goes smoothly and I field any concerns from local officials or residents. Our managers and team always support me in striving to do the right thing.

As an Ohioan, I am pleased to work in my home state helping to build the future for our communities. That future is exciting. Today I am working on small cell networks in the right-of-way and indoor wireless systems covering major venues. But in the future I may be building networks to support package delivery by drone, edge computing, or smart cities. We will use our knowledge, experience, and shared assets to bring these innovations to market.

If the bill is adopted, we will not be able to move our business forward but our direct competitors will. Right now, when my team works in the right-of-way, we go to the municipal counter and pull permits for Crown Castle. This allows us to work in the right-of-way because we are the owner of the project. No one else is allowed to work on the project except under our direct supervision and control. If there is a problem, we are the only company legally and financially obligated to fix it. I take this responsibility very seriously, because lives are at risk if I don't do my job.

If this bill is adopted, I will no longer be able to obtain permits. I will have no authority to interact with City officials, and I won't be able to resolve their concerns. Most importantly, I won't be able to improve and expand our own networks. The permit is not just for the construction, it gives us the authorization for our equipment to occupy the right-of-way once it is on-air. The holder of the permits (likely our first carrier customer on the network) will never take on the legal and financial responsibility so that Crown Castle may provide service to someone else. The risk is big and there is nothing in it for them. Lastly, Crown Castle's employees will be inferior to our direct competitors doing the same work in the right of way.

Crown Castle is growing rapidly to meet huge demand. I love being able to do this important work here at home, but if this bill passes this vital work will happen in other states, not in Ohio. Please do not let that happen. Thank you very much for your time today.