



ENERGY AND  
PUBLIC UTILITIES  
COMMITTEE

Witness Form

Today's Date 02-02-2021

Name: Ryan Mack

Address: 500 Court St., Ste. A

Defiance OH 43512

Telephone: 419-782-4761

Organization Representing: Defiance County Commissioners

Testifying on Bill Number: Senate Bill 8

Testimony:  Verbal  Written  Both

Testifying As:  Proponent  Opponent  Interested Party

Are you a Registered Lobbyist?  Yes  No

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# Defiance County Board of Commissioners

*Mick Pocratsky, Ryan Mack, and David S. Kern*

Tuesday, February 2, 2021

Good Morning Chairman Peterson and members of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee. My name is Ryan Mack, and I am Vice-President of the Board of Defiance County Commissioners.

Thank you for this opportunity to write in support of Senate Bill 8, the Rural Broadband Grant Expansion Program in the State of Ohio. Internet accessibility is the great equalizer of our time. It allows a young boy or girl in rural Hicksville, Ohio access to the same knowledge and opportunities as anyone else on the world stage. The current state of internet infrastructure in the state of Ohio, if not addressed, will hamper our ability to educate our youth and be competitive on the world scene with economic development for generations to come.

The goal for many is more fiber; however, this bill correctly remains tech neutral because in places like Northwest Ohio, the ability to just lay fiber to every home is simply not financially feasible even with strong grant programs. As the State looks forward, an all of the above strategy must be employed, combining a strong backbone of fiber optic lines to towers that broadcast high-speed broadband into farmhouses and along fields all over the rural Ohio countryside. These strategies, mixed with the latest satellite options, will help Ohio farmers be more efficient and ensure Ohio businesses and manufactures have the ability to set the pace in a world market. This bill correctly allows internet providers, who are already employing such strategies, to be competitive in the grant program.

I would like to inform this committee that lack of connectivity is not a rich versus poor problem; this is a game of geography, and the ability to build infrastructure capable of true high-speed broadband is imperative. I can give you stories of businesses losing hundreds of thousands of dollars because their internet goes out for days at a time. I can introduce you to two biomedical researchers, who upon moving back home to Ohio found they did not have the ability to live on property that had been in one family for generations because regardless of what they paid, they would never be able to get the speeds necessary to do their jobs. However, that information is just 1 lone County of the 88 Ohio counties. My County cannot be alone in this issue, and because every single day that we delay the technology the divide grows.

We, as leaders in Ohio, have one chance to get this right and close the digital divide thereby securing a strong future for our children and grandchildren. Updated grant programs like this allow the government to create more financial partnerships with the private sector and advance the availability of this essential utility to more Ohioans. In the same way that government has helped with the buildout of other utilities that we consider vital to life in a civilized society, we must continue to help improve and build out better broadband infrastructure.

Chairman Peterson and members of this committee, I thank you for taking the time to read this on behalf of myself and the people of Defiance County. I hope that you will advance Senate Bill 8, for the future of Ohio.

Ryan Mack  
Vice-President  
Defiance County Commissioners

**500 Court Street, Suite A**  
**Defiance, Ohio 43512**  
**Email: [commissioners@defiance-county.com](mailto:commissioners@defiance-county.com)**

**Phone: 419-782-4761**  
**Fax: 419-782-8449**  
**[www.defiance-county.com](http://www.defiance-county.com)**