



May 30, 2022

The Honorable Rob McColley  
Chairman, Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
1 Capitol Square - 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: Ohio Chamber of Commerce Support – Sub. HB 560 with Basic Local Exchange Service Language

Dear Chairman McColley,

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce stands in support of legislative action that will finally make real the work of the Ohio General Assembly to encourage investment in modern telecommunications technologies. Our elected members of the Ohio legislature passed House Bill 64 into law seven years ago. It established a process for ‘incumbent local exchange carriers’ or ILECs to withdraw residential ‘basic local exchange service’ or BLES - the traditional landline service seldom used today - in order to balance the deployment of new technologies with consumer access to traditional service.

Before BLES would be withdrawn, the new law stipulated customers must have reasonable and comparatively priced voice service from another provider giving them access to 9-1-1 services, and the FCC had to allow the withdrawal. This careful approach provided for a historic transition from costly maintenance of last-century technology to investment in the next-generation internet-based networks and services that allow Ohio families to work and learn from home.

Seven years later, however, Ohioans have yet to see the full benefit of this change in focus because the intended six-month implementation of HB 64 is still not complete. In the meantime, Ohio has continued to see a sharp decline in consumer demand for outdated services primarily delivered over old, copper networks. It is evident that traditional, landline connectivity and other traditional services are becoming irretrievably obsolete.

Consumers are making a clear choice for modern, high-speed connectivity provided over wireless or fiber-based networks, and it is essential that communications providers have the ability to invest in the services consumers need. Therefore, the Ohio Chamber supports the adoption of Sub HB 560 with the newly incorporated amendment that will, at long last, provide for the implementation of the intended benefits of HB 64 and ensure telecommunications investment dollars are spent on the products and services that Ohio’s workers and families need.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Carfagna". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rick Carfagna  
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs  
Ohio Chamber of Commerce

Cc: The Honorable Kirk Schuring, Vice Chair, Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
The Honorable Sandra Williams, Ranking Member, Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee  
All Members, Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee