



Defiance County Board of Commissioners

Ryan Mack, Michael W. Pocratsky, and Gary L. Plotts

Good Morning Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Ryan, Ranking Member Cera and members of the House Finance Committee. My name is Ryan Mack and I am President of the Board of Defiance County Commissioners.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 281 to establish the Residential Broadband Expansion Program which will provide matching grants to local communities for last mile broadband expansion.

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 fiber optic 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. This bill is the best step in the right direction to address these serious infrastructure issues.

I, personally, can tell you the stories of school age children unable to complete homework, because their technologically advanced schools give out assignments requiring internet speeds that are not readily available to the homes those children return to. 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 show you data from a recent Defiance College study showing that over 50% of the businesses in my County experience slowed internet speeds or complete internet breaks for days at a time over the last 3 months. However, that information is just 1 lone County of the 88. My County cannot be alone in this issue, and because every single day that we delay the technology divide grows, it is imperative that you move this bill forward.

This bill is also significant because it does what we at the local level of government continually ask for, it is optional and it allows us to match our local funds with state funds to move proposed internet infrastructure projects forward. Without public and private partnerships these projects will never be able to get off the ground.

Chairman Smith and members of this committee, I thank you for the time you have given me to speak on behalf of Defiance County. I hope that you will advance House Bill 281, for the future of Ohio.

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