



Feb. 9, 2021

The Honorable
Representative Scott Oelslager
Chairman, Finance Committee
Ohio House of Representative

Dear Chairman Oelslager:

The Mayors Association of Portage, Stark and Summit counties, is a non-partisan organization that is comprised of the chief elected officials of 28 communities. Our mission includes promoting the development of effective civic policy; strengthening cross-community relationships that lead to growth and improved efficiencies; providing input to state and federal officials on critical issues facing communities of all sizes; identifying and mobilizing public and private resources that create economic growth and sustainable jobs; and creating a forum and trusted network for local officials to share information, experiences, opportunities and challenges.

Access to reliable, high-speed, broadband internet in underserved and unserved areas is an important issue facing the cities and villages we represent. As we continue to battle with the Coronavirus pandemic effective and reliable broadband is even more critical. I am writing you today to express MAPSS support of House Bill 2, which would create a grant program designed to expand broadband access to customer in communities in the state that currently lack access. The extension of broadband access to customers in communities will strengthen our economy and provide better opportunities for businesses, schools and residents in many parts of our region.

The members of MAPSS represent a diverse mix of urban, suburban and rural communities. Unfortunately, there are broadband gaps that create obstacles for residents and business owners. The grant program proposed in HB 2 would provide support to filling in the gaps and helping the residents of our communities have reliable access to broadband.

MAPSS believes that HB 2 would create a strong public-private partnership to address urgent infrastructure needs. In addition, MAPSS believes the program should be administered in a way that encourages effectiveness and allows for competitive participation. MAPSS encourages your committee and the Ohio House of Representatives to act swiftly to approve HB 2.

Regards.

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