



Proponent Testimony on Senate Bill 8
Presented by Jeff Hoagland, President and CEO, Dayton Development Coalition
Ohio Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee
February 2, 2021

Chairman Peterson, Vice Chairman Schuring, Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Ohio Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on behalf of Senate Bill 8, which creates Ohio's first residential broadband expansion program to serve unserved or underserved residential areas of Ohio with last mile broadband infrastructure.

The Dayton Development Coalition supports passage of this legislation, and we thank Senator McColley for sponsoring this important initiative.

The Dayton Development Coalition is the leading economic development organization in the 14-county Dayton region and we serve as the JobsOhio network partner. Working closely with public and private regional partners, our mission is to recruit, expand and retain jobs. Many of the communities we serve are rural communities that need better access to broadband services, and we feel this legislation is a good first step to closing the digital divide.

Dayton is also home to Ohio's largest single-site employer, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and the Coalition advocates for the critical missions performed there. Many of our defense contractors and military families rely on broadband services as an economic necessity.

As I'm sure you've heard from other proponents of this legislation, the COVID-19 pandemic has cast a bright light on the need for new investment throughout Ohio in broadband, not only for businesses, but also for residential household where parents work from home and children in some districts attend school virtually. Our communities need broadband services so that residents can participate in video conferencing and their children can download video lessons and homework.

The Coalition is supportive of the creation of the Residential Broadband Expansion Program to construct last-mile broadband infrastructure. This \$20 million dollar fund will help our rural communities invest in broadband services, and will help make these communities more competitive as we recruit companies to our state.

The Coalition views passage of this legislation as an important tool in bringing more jobs and investment to the Dayton region and we thank you for your consideration of this important bill.