

Senator Bob Peterson
Chair, Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee
1 Capitol Square, 1st Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Delivered via email: nicole.hoyer@ohiosenate.gov



February 1, 2021

The Honorable Chair Peterson,

The OBL is the foremost trade association for the Ohio banking industry – and is Ohio’s only organization focused on meeting the needs of *all banks and thrifts* in the Buckeye State. The non-profit association is comprised of more than 170 FDIC-insured financial institutions including commercial banks, savings banks, and savings and loan associations ranging in size from just over \$13 million in assets to more than \$3 trillion and employing over 60,000 Ohioans.

On behalf of OBL members, I write to you in support of Senate Bill 8. The issue of reliable access to broadband internet is one that touches so many aspects of Ohioans daily lives and the economy. This has been highlighted more than ever through the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased use of online tools for everyday activities. Senate Bill 8 takes on this significant issue by incentivizing the private sector to expand access to underserved areas throughout Ohio. This will aid in economic development in those areas where access is currently lacking.

Banking customer preferences have been trending towards online banking and away from branches for many years—well before the pandemic. The pandemic significantly increased the use of online and mobile banking adoption. However, in areas without reliable internet access, those individuals are left without the same level of access to their finances. Our members in those areas have taken significant steps to remain open, with safety precautions for both customers and employees, but having additional options for the Ohioans in those areas is crucial.

We appreciate the hard work that has gone into this bill and Senator McColley for taking it on. For these reasons, we urge you to support Senate Bill 8. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding our position at dboyd@ohiobankersleague.com or (614) 340-7608.

Sincerely,

Don Boyd
VP, State Government Relations & General Counsel