



**Ohio REALTORS® Written Proponent Testimony for Senate Bill 8
February 5, 2021**

Chair Peterson, Vice Chair Schuring, and Ranking Member Williams, and members of the Ohio Senate Energy & Public Utilities Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to write on behalf of Ohio REALTORS® in support of Senate Bill 8, a bill that would expand broadband access across Ohio. We thank Senator McColley for sponsoring this important legislation and bringing attention to underserved communities that lack access to broadband.

Ohio REALTORS® represents more than 35,000 members who serve all communities – both large and small – across the Great State of Ohio. Many REALTORS® reside in areas of the state where accessing high speed internet to operate their small business is a non-issue, however far too many members live in areas that are underserved by broadband access. Unfortunately, this is the case for many people, students, and businesses here Ohio.

Even before the COVID 19 pandemic we were aware of these inequities. However, in the midst of the pandemic that has forced tens of thousands of Ohioans to work remotely, the severity of the issue is heightened and the importance of filling those gaps has become even more critical. At Ohio REALTORS® we desire success for all our members and their businesses. By expanding access to high speed internet across our state, the ability for real estate professionals to offer their clients the most current technological tools when purchasing either a residential or commercial property would greatly improve.

Additionally, it goes without saying that a home “on the grid” is more desirable than a home that cannot get access to today’s technology, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic has forever changed how we work. In fact, in the Journal of Applied Economics, a 2019 article¹ found that single-family homes with access to broadband connection have a price that is roughly \$6,000 more, or 3% more than similar homes with significantly slower or no connections.

Broadband expansion is a vitally important, shared benefit for all Ohioans. Expansion will improve our individual and collective connectivity and better position current and future Ohioans to meet the technological demands of tomorrow today. We encourage passage of Senate Bill 8.

Sincerely,

Scott Williams
Chief Executive Office
Ohio REALTORS®

¹ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00036846.2019.1631443?journalCode=raec20>