



February 9, 2021

Re: HB 2 Proponent Letter

Dear Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Plummer, and Ranking Member Crawley,

On behalf of our six organizations, and the thousands of Ohio businesses we collectively represent, we write to you today to urge passage of House Bill 2, a bill that would expand broadband access to communities across Ohio. Our organizations believe it is imperative that the House and Senate prioritize HB 2 for deliberation and passage early this legislative session.

As representatives of Ohio's business community, we particularly want to stress the positive impact on jobs that can be expected from an expansion of residential broadband access to unserved or underserved areas. Communities without broadband access are often left behind, and it is becoming more and more of a necessity for everyday life. Expanded access at increased speeds will allow more people to consider remote work job opportunities, which will allow people to consider a broader range of job positions. It will also allow more people to participate in online job training programs to prepare them for in-demand jobs, including tech jobs that can often be done remotely.

Additionally, when businesses across Ohio are recruiting new talent, prospective employees who are looking to move into a new region expect to have stable access to the Internet and the other services that go along with that. If Ohio does not have an adequate infrastructure built out, it can impede the business community's ability to recruit the best people and grow our local economies – all while holding Ohioans back from their own goals and full potential.

More than ever before, Ohioans expect to be able to participate in the online marketplace, receive telehealth services, and engage in educational opportunities from their homes via the Internet. Without expansion, hundreds of thousands of Ohioans and the local economies where they live will be left behind.

We believe expanding access to broadband would provide this General Assembly an early opportunity to get a big win for Ohio's citizens. Therefore, we respectfully urge you to approve House Bill 2 and bring it to the House floor for a full vote during the initial session days of 2021.