



**HB 13 (Carfagna, O'Brien) – Broadband Expansion Program  
Proponent Testimony (Written Only)  
Ohio Municipal League & Ohio Township Association  
May 28, 2019**

On behalf of our members, we are writing to offer our support for House Bill 13, which would establish the residential broadband expansion program within the Development Services Agency (DSA) to award matching grants for last mile broadband expansion in municipal corporations and townships.

Our associations continue to advocate for reliable and affordable high-speed internet (or broadband access) for all of Ohio. Internet access has swiftly become a necessity for Ohioans' daily lives, offering crucial, life-improving services, such as educational and employment opportunities. In addition to directly improving residents' access to job and educational resources, internet access can bring economic development to an area, either through e-commerce or by attracting those who choose to only live and work in communities that have internet access. However, such access continues to be an issue for local governments and their residents.

House Bill 13, a reintroduction of HB 281 from the last General Assembly, would bring internet access to forgotten or overlooked parts of Ohio communities by establishing a "last mile" broadband expansion program. Together, a municipality or township and the county in which it is located would fund two-thirds of the project costs to bring broadband to an unreached part of a community. The rest of the project would be funded by state funds awarded through DSA. This financing structure provides local governments the opportunity to bring internet access to parts of their communities when it would otherwise be cost-prohibitive. This permissive legislation will allow communities to join together to provide approximately thirty percent of Ohioans with the benefits of connectivity to broadband infrastructure.

Ohioans should not be deprived of broadband's benefits and opportunities simply because of where they live. We appreciate Rep. Carfagna's and Rep. O'Brien's recognition of the need for last-mile broadband access and for creating a solution to the existing cost barrier.

The Ohio Municipal League and the Ohio Township Association continue to support HB 13 and urge the House Finance Committee to favorably report the bill to the full House for a vote. Thank you for your consideration. Should you have any questions or concerns about our position, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,

Kent Scarrett  
Executive Director  
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