

PROPOSED RESOLUTION – BROADBAND FOR ALL

Reference: State Platform
Category: Other / Essential Infrastructure
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Adopted by:

WHEREAS: Governor Whitmer, Lt. Governor Gilchrist, U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, State Representative Donna Lasinski and former State Representative/Congressional candidate Gretchen Driskell have gone on the record that high speed broadband is a top infrastructure priority; and,

WHEREAS: broadband is the only true future proof internet access technology available today, is an essential component of everyday life in the 21st century, and is defined as a minimum of 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload; and

WHEREAS: in Washtenaw County alone almost 8,000 households (about 20,000 people) do not have access to broadband at their homes; and

WHEREAS: the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the dire and immediate need for affordable, reliable high speed broadband internet access at homes and businesses; and

WHEREAS: the WCDP recognizes that the inequitable access to affordable, reliable high speed broadband disproportionately impacts communities of color and rural communities; and

WHEREAS: the digital divide is exacerbating the homework gap and learning inequity for students without broadband access at home; and

WHEREAS: educators are burdened with having to develop instruction for students both with and without high speed broadband at home; and

WHEREAS: lack of broadband access stifles entrepreneurship and attraction of both businesses and talent; and

WHEREAS: lack of broadband access negatively impacts economic development, property values, personal prosperity, education, health and safety and overall quality of life; and

WHEREAS: farmers rely on high speed broadband to monitor their crops, maintain their essential and costly equipment as well as tracking commodity prices, promoting agri-tourism and selling their products; and

WHEREAS: having broadband access enables cost savings in many areas of personal commerce, yielding hundreds of thousands of dollars each year in overspending by those without broadband; and

WHEREAS: communities without broadband experience higher rates of lost lives, injury, and crime, and residents in these communities have difficulty leveraging capabilities like TeleHealth, online banking, virtual meetings, working remotely and distance learning; and

WHEREAS: broadband access can combat the isolation experienced by our seniors and those living alone by enabling them to stay connected to family and friends; and

WHEREAS: broadband is an essential infrastructure that has heretofore been allowed to operate as an unregulated monopolistic utility resulting in a lack of competition; and

WHEREAS: the broadband coverage data reported by the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) Form 477, is self-reported by incumbent service providers and aggregated to the census block level making the data unreliable and lacking in the granularity needed for accurate coverage inferences; and

WHEREAS: special assessment districts are not allowed for communication infrastructure; and

WHEREAS: wireless solutions are a line of site technology that cannot reach everyone; and

WHEREAS: 5G is a wireless technology that only enhances existing internet service and requires high speed fiber optic cable towers every 328 feet; and

WHEREAS: building large scale cell towers is prohibitively expensive (\$250,000 to erect) and must be fed by fiber optic anyway; and

WHEREAS: satellite isn't a viable solution due to low data limits, high lag times and diminished or dropped connectivity; and

WHEREAS: data caps make true unlimited access to high speed connectivity unaffordable; and

WHEREAS: "unlimited" data plans throttle speeds down to a crawl at unreasonably low use thresholds necessitating expensive data add-ons to maintain a level of connectivity with minimal lag time and buffering; and

WHEREAS: incumbent internet service providers (ISPs) such as Verizon, Comcast, Charter, Frontier, SBC and AT&T not only lobby against measures supporting expansion of Michigan's high speed fiber network into less densely populated areas but also refuse to expand into or provide access to their high speed fiber optic infrastructure in these under and un-served communities,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the WCDP urges Governor Whitmer, Lt. Governor Gilchrist, Michigan's State Legislators and Michigan's Congressional Delegation to enact measures that will achieve affordable and reliable high speed broadband access for all.

SIGNATURE OF CHAIRPERSON: _____
Date