

City of Cuyahoga Falls

Office of the Mayor

Mayor Don Walters
2310 Second Street
Cuyahoga Falls OH 44221



Phone: 330-971-8200
Fax: 330-971-8168
mayor@cityofcf.com

June 15, 2021

Dear Legislator,

The Ohio Senate Omnibus Budget Amendment includes language that would modify Chapter 122 of the Ohio Revised Code to prevent political subdivisions from offering broadband service. Public ownership of a high-speed, reliable broadband network is critical to ensure that Ohio's residents and businesses can receive affordable, reliable and sufficient broadband to be able to compete and prosper in today's economy, and I am writing today with the hope that you will vote in opposition to the proposed amendment.

Accessible and affordable broadband provides for critical communication between our public safety forces, including advanced-911 systems and the competitiveness of our businesses and the ability to attract and retain business and employment opportunities in our State, and access to meaningful educational opportunities for all Ohioans. It helps provide a level playing field where Ohioans from all socio-economic backgrounds can obtain the tools they need to succeed, enhanced security to ensure that personal and business data of Ohioans is secure, and advances in new technologies for Ohio to become an active player in our global economy, particularly in areas like autonomous transportation, enhanced security protections and medical advancements. Moreover, the American Rescue Plan Act specifically lists public broadband as an acceptable use.

The Public-Owned Broadband Restriction Amendment was added to the Ohio Senate Omnibus Budget Amendment at the twelfth hour, in an attempt to place the profits of a handful of companies ahead of the health, education, safety and welfare of Ohioans, with absolutely no public discussion or debate. It monopolizes an essential service in the hands of a small number of private companies, who have failed or refused to adequately provide affordable, reliable and sufficient broadband service to many of Ohio's residents and business, and is yet another infringement upon the home rule authority of municipalities and charter counties that use such authority to provide for the health, safety and welfare of their residents.

The health, education, safety, and welfare of the residents of Summit County require the unfettered ability of the County and its political subdivisions, including Cuyahoga Falls, to provide affordable, reliable and sufficient broadband services at levels that ensure the needs of its residents and businesses can participate in the 21st century digital economy and beyond. The City of Cuyahoga Falls requests that you oppose the Public-Owned Broadband Restriction Amendment contained in the Ohio Senate Omnibus Budget Amendment to the extent that would modify Chapter 122 of the Ohio Revised Code (specifically to add Sections 122.4090, 122.4091, 122.4093, 122.4095, 122.4097, and 122.4098) to restrict public-owned broadband networks.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Don Walters", is written over a light blue background.

Don Walters
Mayor