

To: Governor Dewine, Lt Gov Husted

Senate and House leadership teams

Fr. Bernie Hovey

Mayor, Village of Silver Lake

Re: Senate Omnibus Budget Amendment

June 17, 2021

As Mayor of the Village of Silver Lake, I write to let you know that I vigorously oppose the Senate Omnibus Budget Amendment prohibiting the new construction of public-owned broadband networks.

Broadband is an essential service for all residents of Ohio. To prohibit public owned broadband networks does not serve the State of Ohio well. To allow only private companies to provide such service constitutes allowing a monopoly of such service to continue to exist and denies Ohio citizens and businesses the opportunity to receive affordable, reliable and sufficient broadband from a source of their own choosing. It does not allow for a level playing field for broadband services and prohibits one's choice in choosing broadband service.

There is no logical or fiscally sound reason for broadband service to be the sole domain of private companies. If public entities can provide reliable broadband service at prices comparable, or perhaps even more attractive, than those of private companies, then such competition should be both allowed and encouraged. Private citizens and Ohio businesses deserve to have a choice when it comes to choosing a broadband service. They may choose a private company for such service, or they may opt to choose a public one. But the choice should be theirs; competition and choice serve all of us better than monopolies.

Again, as Mayor of the Village of Silver Lake, I strongly urge you to oppose and not pass the amendment. A resolution to this effect will be presented to Village council at our next meeting, 6/21, where I expect it to receive unanimous support.