



Testimony Provided to the

House Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications Committee

February 14, 2018

Colin Hansen, Executive Director

Testimony in Support of to H.B. 2701

Kansas Municipal Utilities (KMU) is the statewide association of community owned and operated electric, natural gas, water, wastewater, stormwater and telecommunications utilities across Kansas. As a non-profit association established by its member utilities in 1928, KMU is dedicated to serving the training needs and legislative & regulatory interests of our 180 consumer-owned utilities and the citizens, businesses and industries that they serve. Our membership ranges in size from some of the largest utilities in the state such as those operated by Kansas City Board of Public Utilities and the City of Wichita, down to some of the smallest utility systems in the state, some serving fewer than 100 customers.

Broadband deployment is a critical issue impacting all our member communities whether they are large or small, rural or urban. Our member utilities provide services that are fundamental to Kansans living the life they want to live – whether it is affordable power, the warmth of natural gas, clean, reliable and affordable drinking water. Broadband service is quickly becoming a basic utility service and Kansans across the state should have access to reliable, high-speed internet. Whether you are a large industrial customer in Wichita needing higher internet speeds to download large data files to the doctor serving Lakin and the surrounding areas to the artisan outside of Tonognoxié who ships her goods globally, broadband is the lynchpin of our new economy.

Because of the fiber backbone that exists to support our existing utilities, our member utilities already are an integral part of the broadband deployment discussion. We connect with other local government services and in some instances businesses or non-profits have asked to connect to our services, so they have access to a more robust network. KMU supports HB 2701 and would respectfully request that if this committee works the bill, that you would consider adding a representative of Kansas Municipal Utilities (KMU) to the taskforce as like the other taskforce members, we are uniquely placed to help further broadband deployment across Kansas.

Thank you for your consideration.