

To: Senate Utilities Committee

From: Erik Sartorius, Executive Director

Date: March 20, 2018

RE: Testimony in Support of House Bill 2701

The League of Kansas Municipalities appreciates the opportunity to offer testimony in favor of House Bill 2701, which creates the Statewide Broadband Expansion Task Force.

The access to, and deployment of, broadband services are growing concerns among residents and businesses across Kansas. Our cities understand these concerns and believe that access to broadband services is an important component of the long-term success of many of them.

The League's member cities, like members of other associations, can have diverse circumstances and interests regarding broadband service. To that end, we appreciate the fact that this bill would allow the League to appoint a member to the task force.

While part of the original charge of the task force was to "prioritize the expansion of broadband services first to unserved areas of the state and then to underserved areas," this task force is not narrowly focused on rural broadband. Broadband providers and local governments will be affected by any policies recommended by the task force and adopted by the legislature, which is why it is important to have task force members from all of the interested parties.

The League supports House Bill 2701. Cities stand ready to work with other parties on the challenging task of bringing broadband service to our state—both to rural communities and to other underserved areas of our state. With that in mind, we respectfully ask that your committee recommend this bill favorably for passage.