



SITA

State Independent Telephone Association

of Kansas

February 13, 2020

HB 2618

Before the House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications

Good morning Chairman Seiwert, Vice-Chair Schreiber, and Ranking Member Kuether. Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 2618 establishing the state broadband deployment grant program.

The State Independent Telephone Association of Kansas, (“SITA”) is a 59-year-old non-profit advocacy and trade association supporting rural local exchange carriers across Kansas. We believe that reliable, robust, sustainable broadband deployment is critical to the future well-being of the state of Kansas and its citizens. Without such broadband, Kansas and its citizens will be left behind in the ever-shrinking global, digital marketplace making up much of today’s modern commerce system.

With such broadband, however, Kansas and its citizens can create digital opportunities allowing the growth of previously declining rural communities and the proliferation of modern necessities such as precision agriculture, telemedicine, distance learning, and more.

For several years SITA and its member companies have worked closely with Mr. Stanley Adams, Director of Broadband Initiatives at the Department of Commerce. We urge this Committee to ensure that there is sufficient personnel and funding resources provided to the Department of Commerce and Mr. Adams’ office to ensure the Department’s ability to create a grant application and review process and challenge process that is robust and meaningful.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 2618. We would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

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