



2020 Special Committee on Economic Recovery

December 8, 2020

Testimony regarding broadband expansion

By Megan Bottenberg, Manager of Government Affairs

Chairwoman, Vice Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Cox Communications, a member of the Kansas Cable Telecommunications Association (KCTA), is the largest provider of broadband in the state. Cox provides broadband in 92 Kansas communities—from Gas to Wichita, Garden City to Pittsburg and Topeka. We offer residential internet speeds from 25/3 up to 1 Gig in every town we serve, including Gas.

Since the start of the pandemic, Cox has worked with school districts, businesses, and cities to respond to the needs of critical connectivity in their communities. In March, Cox offered at no charge for the first 60 days our low-cost internet option (Connect2Compete) for those families who receive government assistance and who did not have access to internet in their homes. Although the free and valuable services expired in July when school was over, Connect2Compete (C2C) continues to be available at \$9.95 per month to those who need it, in addition to other offers for students and families.

However, we recognized early on more needed to be done. Families across Kansas need reliable internet with speeds greater than 25/3 mbps. Thanks to the broadband grant dollars through the Kansas Department of Commerce, we have been able to help communities provide greater connectivity to their residents.

Connectivity Emergency Response Grant (CERG)

In October, Cox was awarded a CERG grant of nearly \$1.5 million to expand to nearly 600 unserved homes—two areas in Shawnee County (near Topeka); 2 areas in Sedgwick County (near Derby & Kechi); and 1 area near Dodge City. The Shawnee County and Sedgwick County builds are all fiber to the home, while Dodge City is using our hybrid fiber coax technology. All of these residents will have up to 1 Gig of service by December 31. Due to the short timeframe and quick deadline to complete these projects, we have had crews working all over the state, even on the weekends when weather is nice now that winter weather is approaching.

Broadband Partnership Adoption Grants

Since July, Cox has also been working with school districts across the state to put in place a program to help more free and reduced lunch students sign up for internet through our C2C program. These school districts also received funding through the Broadband Partnership Adoption Grants to subsidize the monthly fee for this internet plan for students who qualify. These are great partnerships that we have built with local school districts to help more low-income families adopt internet into their homes.

Cox Communications is pleased with the progress we have made since March—helping more families, more Kansans, across the state become more connected during a time of critical need. We look forward to the future of additional opportunities to help more families get access and adopt internet into their homes.