



Chair Klevorn and Members of the House State and Local Government Committee:

The South Washington County Telecommunications Commission (SWCTC) would like to voice our **strong support for The Equal Access to Broadband Act**.

We know in south Washington County that local franchising works and allows local governments to negotiate agreements with for-profit businesses to use the public right-of-way. Local franchising is a proven way to ensure complete buildout provisions, no redlining or cherry picking, non-compliance provisions, local oversight of commercial users in streets and on public assets, and local customer service resolution.

In addition, The Equal Access to Broadband Act will modernize the funding structure of local community focused television that bring essential hyper local programming and information to area residents. From government meetings, candidate and election programming, sports, news, business spotlights, education and health, community events and festivals, music, arts and more. This programming has become essential with the loss of local newspapers in many markets. While our programs are distributed on digital platforms, such as YouTube, Roku and social media, franchise fees are paid **ONLY** on (decreasing) traditional cable TV service. Franchising broadband will level the playing field and provide ongoing funding to continue serving the needs of our community.

Please let us know if you need further information. Thank you for your work on behalf of our residents and our community!

Sincerely,

Ann Schweisguth  
Interim Executive Director  
South Washington County Telecommunications Commission (SWCTC)