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HB 2451 – Creating a Statewide Broadband Deployment Authorization

February 7, 2018

Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee

Mr. Chairman, Committee Members:

HB 2451 is a second way to create a statewide rural broadband franchise program. It is more complex than HB 2449 because HB 2451 only applies to rural areas and defines broadband as 25/3 with latency and capability requirements. I previously discussed the rationale for this definition of broadband in my testimony for HB 2563. Rural is defined as 100 people per square mile, not including county seats.

HB 2451 authorizes the KCC to authorize broadband service in rural areas, specifies the information required in the application, responsiveness to customer and potential customer contacts, communications with local governments, and details the paying of the broadband service provider fee (franchise fee).

HB 2451 would permit any broadband provider to identify the specific area and number of customers in rural areas that their business and economic models deem feasible to serve. The Commission reviews applications for service-area comprehensiveness, viability of the proposed provider, and other essential factors. This is a stand-alone opportunity, or can be combined with the Rural Broadband Deployment and Maintenance Fund created in HB 2563.

Mr. Chairman, Committee Members, thank you for your attention. I will respond to questions at the appropriate time.