

To: House Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications Committee

From: Erik Sartorius, Executive Director

Date: February 14, 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 request that this committee mimic language found on page 1, lines 21-26, for the League. This language grants two appointments each for the Kansas Rural Independent Telephone Coalition and the Kansas Cable Telecommunications Association, so that they may have both rural and urban service areas represented. We believe this same logic should apply to cities and that we be allowed to make a rural and urban appointment to the task force.

While the task force is directed 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. Rather, the entire state, including providers and local governments, will be affected by any policies recommended by the task force and adopted by the legislature.

The League supports House Bill 2701. We would ask that the committee allow the perspectives of urban and rural municipalities into this discussion by adding an additional appointment for both by the League of Kansas Municipalities. 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.