



TESTIMONY OF THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
TO THE HOUSE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
ON HB 2701

February 14, 2018

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in support of HB 2701. KAC member counties passed the following policy priority for the 2018 legislative session: “KAC supports policies that enable broadband development (high-speed internet) and access to improve economic development, telemedicine care, and government efficiency.” This statement reflects an increasing urgency to look at infrastructure as something more than roads, water, and energy. Access to information is essential for communities. And it is essential in the same way that citizens have historically viewed the necessity of roads connecting one town to another.

Based on discussions in legislative meetings and the hallways of the Capitol, it has become apparent that the first step in deploying broadband throughout the state is to study the issues with all stakeholders. We believe the mission of the task force as outlined in section (e) is a good agenda for discussions that will move us forward.

Broadband expansion in Kansas is a priority issue for Kansas counties and we appreciate the inclusion on the task force established in HB 2701. While we are mindful that the committee will want to keep the task force to a certain size and of equal representation, we might suggest that two county representatives be placed on the task force, one representing an urban county and one representing a rural county because the needs are so different based on geography and population.

We appreciate the committee’s continuing efforts to study broadband expansion and we look forward to working with the task force.

Melissa Wangemann
General Counsel/Director of Legislative Services
Wangemann@kansascounties.org
785-272-2585, Ext 307