



Please Vote YES on HB17-1174

Allow Rural Counties to Provide Broadband Infrastructure Through Local Improvement Districts Sponsor: Wilson/Crowder & Guzman

Much has been written about the “digital divide” in Colorado and the lack of adequate broad bandwidth (broadband) Internet service to the rural areas of our state. The reasons for lack of service vary, but more often than not these communities are too sparsely populated, too remote, or in regions where the topography (mountains, valleys, etc.) makes expanding service difficult and expensive. These areas are upside down from a business model standpoint, and telecom providers are unable or unwilling to serve these rural communities due to the large infrastructure investment. Lack of broadband service hurts rural schools and makes rural communities less competitive in their efforts to conduct economic development.

HB 1174 is a small, but meaningful step toward enhancing broadband service throughout Colorado. The bill would expand the use of local improvement districts (LIDs) in counties with a population under 60,000 to finance and construct broadband infrastructure (fiber, towers, etc.) in unserved areas. The existing statute limits the use of LIDs to public utilities (roads, curb and gutter, etc.) and telecommunications service (defined in statute as voice service).

HB 1174 would allow rural counties to form LIDs in partnership with broadband providers (including wireless providers) to expand and build broadband infrastructure, subject to local voter approval. The bill will create one more financing tool in the toolbox for rural communities that are struggling to bring much-needed service and infrastructure to their schools, hospitals, businesses and residents.

CCI strongly urges your support of HB17-1174

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