



## **Please Vote YES on SB17-42**

### **Repeal Law Slowing Rural Broadband Deployment**

**Sponsors: Sens. Guzman & Donovan**

In order to compete in today's economy, communities across the state are dependent on broad bandwidth Internet access ("broadband") for basic business development and operation. The availability of broadband also enhances the quality of life and desirability of a community by providing residents access to online education and distance learning opportunities, telemedicine, online government services and vast entertainment content (movies, music, etc.). In fact, broadband has become so critical to our citizens that many now refer to it as a basic infrastructure need - placing it on even footing with roads, water systems and power grids.

Unfortunately, rural communities across Colorado are still without adequate broadband service and this "broadband divide" is growing every day. The reasons 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 communities are "upside down" from a business model standpoint, and telecom providers are unable or unwilling to connect these areas without assistance.

With no other options, many rural communities around the state are seeking to acquire or construct their own "middle mile" broadband infrastructure in order to attract private Internet providers to their regions. Unfortunately, a law passed in 2005 (SB05-152) prohibits local governments from using public dollars (including state agency grants) to acquire or construct "middle mile" infrastructure without first passing a local ballot question. This prohibition was enacted to prevent competition between governments and private providers, but the reality is local governments are not seeking to compete with telecom companies – they are trying to attract them.

Local governments around the state are working collaboratively to improve service to their communities through partnerships with telecom providers, state government agencies, and economic development organizations. Repealing SB05-152 will expedite this important work, eliminate the need to spend scarce local dollars on elections and help bring the broadband service that our rural communities need to be competitive.

**CCI and CML strongly urge your support of SB17-42**

**Contact:**

Eric Bergman 303.861.4076 // [ebergman@ccionline.org](mailto:ebergman@ccionline.org)  
Tony Lombard 303.884.9113 // [tony@lombardclayton.com](mailto:tony@lombardclayton.com)  
Kevin Bommer 303.831.6411 // [kbommer@cml.org](mailto:kbommer@cml.org)

