



Please Vote YES on HB18-1099

Ensure That Broadband Deployment Grants Awarded to Improve Rural Service Deliver the Speeds Promised

Sponsors: Catlin & McLachlan/Coram

In 2014, the General Assembly passed legislation creating a Broadband Deployment Board to give grants to Internet service providers (ISPs) to bring broadband to unserved and underserved rural communities across the state. Under the current grant-making rules, incumbent providers can exercise a “right of first refusal” and take a broadband grant away from a smaller ISP if it is in the incumbent provider’s service area. The incumbent provider would then be responsible to undertake the broadband improvements in that community as provided for in the grant.

Last year, a grant was awarded to a small local Internet provider in Southwest Colorado to bring fiber to the town of Ridgway. The grant was subsequently taken by an incumbent provider (under the right of first refusal) and was used instead to build digital subscriber lines (DSL) in the community. DSL is an antiquated technology and cannot deliver the same Internet speeds as fiber to the home.

HB 1099 would hold incumbent providers accountable when they invoke the right of first refusal. The bill requires that any incumbent provider who usurps a grant **must provide equal or better service/speeds with the same pricing** as that promised by the original grant recipient, thereby ensuring that rural communities are not shortchanged on these critical infrastructure improvements.

CCI Asks for Your YES Vote on HB18-1099

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