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February 21, 2020

Chairman Dereck E. Davis  
231 House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Delegate Davis,

On behalf of the 1,000 members of the Coastal Association of REALTORS®, the leading real estate trade association on the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland, I write in support of HB0999, Member-Regulated Cooperatives – Establishment (Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020).

Our association supports the growth of strong, viable communities, which prosper when there is access to high speed Internet. Property values increase, businesses grow, and jobs are created. In our modern society, highspeed Internet is as important as water and electricity, and the access of broadband makes a community more attractive for new investment and development.

Many of our members are well aware of the impact that broadband has on a home's value. In some of our more rural areas on the Lower Eastern Shore, it can be nearly impossible to sell a home that does not have highspeed Internet access. In fact, a 2015 study conducted by the University of Colorado at Boulder and Carnegie Mellon University found that availability of broadband increases a home's value by 3.1 percent.

Every Marylander should have access to high-speed, world-class communications infrastructure. High-capacity broadband connectivity should be affordable and widely accessible. A variety of options should be considered to encourage quality broadband deployment and adoption including action by the public and private sector.

Our association applauds Choptank Electric Cooperative for its willingness to invest in the future of the Eastern Shore, and we have full faith in the cooperative to provide affordable, highspeed Internet to its members.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this letter. If you have any questions, please contact the association office at 410-641-4409.

Sincerely,

Joe Wilson  
President  
Coastal Association of REALTORS®

cc Dels. Chris Adams, Carl Anderton, Wayne Hartman, Johnny Mautz, Charles Otto, and Sheree Sample-Hughes; Choptank Electric Cooperative; Maryland REALTORS®