



## WICOMICO COUNTY, MARYLAND

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### WICOMICO COUNTY COUNCIL

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February 28, 2020

Delegate Dereck E. Davis  
Room 231  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Testimony in Support of HB999/Senate Bill No. 540, Member-Regulated Cooperatives-Establishment (Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020)**

Dear Delegate Davis and Committee Members:

Please accept this letter in support of House Bill No. 999/Senate Bill No. 540 to allow member regulation for the Choptank Cooperative. This will allow the Cooperative to bring high speed, fiber internet service to homes and businesses on the Eastern Shore.

In Maryland, thirty-six percent (36%) of residents lack internet service that meets FCC standards and most are in the rural areas like the Eastern Shore. In Wicomico County, there are over 13,895 residents that do not have internet at all or service that does not meet FCC standards.

Choptank has 650 miles of middle-mile fiber installed which is the perfect backbone for expanding broadband out to homes and businesses in rural areas. Local businesses will be able to grow faster with high-speed internet, telemedicine can be utilized, there will be enhanced education opportunities, and farmers will be able to use high speed internet to run modern equipment that will improve yields while reducing nutrient use, thereby helping to meet the Chesapeake Bay Restoration goals.

We thank you for your time and consideration of House Bill No. 999/Senate Bill No. 540 as introduced. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Council Office at 410-548-4696.

Sincerely,

Larry W. Dodd,  
County Council President

cc: Wicomico County Council