



Senate Bill 547 -- *Broadband Expansion Incentive Act of 2023*
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
March 1, 2023
Support

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce (MCCC), the voice of business in Metro Maryland, supports Senate Bill 547 -- *Broadband Expansion Incentive Act of 2023*.

Senate Bill 547 exempts the purchase of network equipment from the sales and use tax and authorizes individuals and corporations to claim an income tax subtraction modification for the amount of any qualified federal broadband grant awarded to the taxpayer during the taxable year.

One of MCCC's longtime policy priorities is greater access to affordable, high-speed broadband for all Marylanders, especially those who are currently underserved by these opportunities. Improved access to broadband has numerous benefits:

- **Learning Opportunities** - There remains a stark divide in learning opportunities for students who live in areas of the State with broadband access and those who do not. Many were aware of the digital divide before the COVID-19 pandemic, but those realities became more pronounced when schools transitioned to remote learning. Closing the digital divide in underserved and unserved areas, which exist in rural and urban environments and many places in between, is an educational imperative. Greater broadband would create greater educational equity and a better prepared future workforce.
- **Economic Growth** - Today, quality high-speed internet is an economic necessity. Access to broadband allows for greater innovation in an increasingly digital economy. If a Marylander lacks access to broadband, they also lack access to economic opportunities, which inhibits entrepreneurship and business formation. Lack of broadband access also makes Maryland less competitive by providing inadequate economic opportunities for all its residents.
- **Social Returns** - More equitable access broadband allows unserved and underserved communities increased access to educational and economic opportunities, but also brings other benefits that come with smart technology. These include access to telehealth that improves health outcomes and public safety technology to make communities safer.

For these reasons, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce supports Senate Bill 547 and respectfully requests a favorable report.

The Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of our nearly 500 members, advocates for growth in business opportunities, strategic investment in infrastructure, and balanced tax reform to advance Metro Maryland as a regional, national, and global location for business success. Established in 1959, MCCC is an independent non-profit membership organization and a proud Montgomery County Green Certified Business.

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