



LEGISLATIVE POSITION:

Favorable

House Bill 551

Broadband Expansion Incentive Act of 2023

House Ways and Means Committee

Thursday, February 16, 2023

Dear Chairwoman Atterbeary and Members of the Committee,

The Calvert County Chamber of Commerce is a vital, dynamic organization that represents more than 377 businesses which collectively supports nearly 14,000 employees working together to develop a productive climate in which to conduct business. Our role as an advocate is to assist our members and the business community find the resources necessary to survive, prosper and grow.

As introduced, House Bill 551 creates a five-year moratorium on the sales and use tax for broadband infrastructure equipment. It also ends state taxation of federal broadband grants, maximizing taxpayer investment in these critical infrastructure projects.

HB 551 will bridge the digital divide and ensure that Maryland businesses and communities are positioned to take advantage of this necessary technology. Maryland employers, schools, community service organizations, and others must increasingly rely on digital access for everyday functions. As such, it is critical now more than ever that Maryland extend broadband access to everyone.

The absence of broadband in the unserved and underserved communities, as well as the businesses of Southern Maryland isolates them from expanding educational and economic opportunities. Our local higher learning institutions, our job seekers and our business owners needing to develop their workforce through online recruiting tools depends on the affordability and accessibility of broadband.

This legislation will put Maryland at the forefront of economic competitiveness, spur business activity across the state and provide jobs and stability. The Calvert County Chamber of Commerce values expanding broadband access and therefore respectfully requests a **favorable report** on **HB 551**.

Respectfully,

Kathryn Maney
President/CEO

Calvert County Chamber of Commerce

The Calvert County Chamber of Commerce

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