



MARYLAND TECH COUNCIL

TO: The Honorable Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair
Members, House Ways and Means Committee
The Honorable Moore-Miller Administration

FROM: Andrew G. Vetter
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DATE: February 16, 2023

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 551 – *Broadband Expansion Incentive Act of 2023*

The Maryland Tech Council (MTC) is pleased to submit this letter of **support** for *House Bill 551: Broadband Expansion Incentive Act of 2023*. We are a community of nearly 700 Maryland member companies that span the full range of the technology sector. Our vision is to propel Maryland to become the number one innovation economy for life sciences and technology in the nation. We bring our members together and build Maryland's innovation economy through advocacy, networking, and education.

Bolstering digital infrastructure is one of the top policy priorities of MTC. The Covid-19 pandemic led to a digital revolution as we experienced an explosion in remote workforce management and virtual engagements and experiences across our daily lives. Remote work, telehealth, and education are just some of the examples where high-speed internet is a daily necessity of life. Despite this need, there continues to be a digital divide in Maryland, with underserved populations and locations lacking the access they need to affordable and reliable internet service.

MTC has and will continue to advocate for efforts to address this digital divide and expand the State's digital economy. House Bill 551 makes a huge step toward this goal by creating a sales and use tax exemption for broadband infrastructure equipment and an end to the taxation of Federal grants for broadband expansion. The establishment of these incentives will help MTC member companies continue to build out the State's broadband infrastructure and move us closer to our goal of ensuring affordable and reliable internet access for all.

We urge a favorable report.