



**Senate Bill 540** – Member-Regulated Cooperatives – Establishment (Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020)

**Position: Support**

Maryland REALTORS® support SB 540 which would allow the Choptank electric cooperative to change into a member-regulated cooperative.

If the bill passes and the Choptank Board of Directors elects to become a member-regulated cooperative, Choptank would have additional flexibility establish broadband services for many communities on the Eastern Shore.

Homebuyers are increasingly interested in a property's access to high-speed internet. Particularly in rural communities, real estate agents often work with clients who walk away from properties which do not have high-speed internet. In fact, studies have shown the value of a home can increase by 3-5% based on whether the property has access to broadband services or not.

The internet continues to grow as an important/necessary utility for a home. Home businesses and schoolwork often demand broad band access. Many new home security products and convenience products require high speed internet. With more businesses allowing employees to work at home, and some employers requiring it, the importance of high-speed internet will continue to grow. Without it, many communities will have trouble attracting and retaining businesses and residents.

For these reasons, the REALTORS® recommend a favorable report.

**For more information contact [bill.castelli@mdrealtor.org](mailto:bill.castelli@mdrealtor.org) or  
[susan.mitchell@mdrealtor.org](mailto:susan.mitchell@mdrealtor.org)**