



City of
Salisbury
Jacob R. Day, Mayor

SB 540/ HB 999

THE RURAL BROADBAND FOR EASTERN SHORE ACT OF 2020

Position: **SUPPORT**

The City of Salisbury, in Wicomico County, **SUPPORTS** SB 540/HB 999, *The Rural Broadband for Eastern Shore Act of 2020*. This bill will address our county-wide need for internet access with a solution provided by a trusted, local partner, Choptank Electric Cooperative.

Wicomico County is home to over 98,000 residents, many of whom live in rural areas and do not have access to reliable high-speed internet. Through the ***Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020***, Choptank Electric Cooperative will be able to leverage existing assets for the **economics-of-scale** necessary to provide high speed fiber internet to residents and businesses in underserved areas of our county.

As a member-regulated Cooperative, Choptank Electric's democratically-elected Board will directly implement policies and services requested by the member-owners of the cooperative. This will allow Choptank Electric to eliminate duplicative regulatory costs and strengthen member engagement, all the while providing transparency and accountability. This will allow economically-efficient broadband deployment across Choptank's Eastern Shore service area.

Electric cooperatives were established over 80-years ago to bring electricity to rural America. Here in Wicomico County and throughout the Eastern Shore we see the need, again, for our cooperative to fill the void that is the "**digital divide**". Internet access is the great equalizer - enabling virtual workforce, distance learning, telemedicine, precision agriculture, and economic opportunity throughout our County.

This bill will put Choptank Electric Cooperative on the same regulatory playing field as over 680 electric cooperatives across the country, including Delaware. The bill will ensure the next generation of rural communities the ability to access the internet. We urge you to support SB 540/HB 999 to allow Choptank Electric Cooperative to deliver broadband internet service quickly and efficiently.

Sincerely,

Jacob R. Day
Mayor