



ESMEC

Serving the Public County School Systems of
Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent
Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester

Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium

January 8, 2020

The Honorable Steven J. Arentz, Chair
Eastern Shore of Maryland Delegation
Maryland General Assembly
6 Bladen Street, Room 308
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Delegate Arentz:

On behalf of the Eastern Shore Superintendents of Schools, I am writing to encourage members of the Eastern Shore Delegation to support the "Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020". To be successful in school and graduate college and career ready, our students need access to high-speed internet. On the Shore, we have a digital divide of homes with or without high-speed internet. The digital divide directly impacts the ability of our students to succeed.

In many areas of the Eastern Shore, our students do not have access to high-speed internet. As school systems, we have implemented several technical solutions to strive to provide high-speed internet to our students living in remote areas. However, these solutions are expensive and lack reliability. For many of our students, high-speed internet is only available at school or public libraries. The initiative proposed by Choptank Electric Cooperative will provide a pathway for our students to have access to high-speed internet.

As rural school systems, we serve approximately 65,000 students attending 129 schools. Some of our students live in municipalities with access to high-speed internet. However, many of our students live in remote areas with no access to high-speed internet. We believe that access to high-speed internet is critical to the success of our students. We urge members of the Eastern Shore Delegation to fully support this bill.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Gaddis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Dr. John Gaddis, President
Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium
Superintendent, Somerset County Public Schools

PC: Members of the Eastern Shore Delegation
Eastern Shore Superintendents of Schools
Dr. Jon M. Andes, Executive Director, ESMEC