



February 25, 2020

Senate Finance Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 East Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Letter of Support of SB 540

Dear Chairman Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman, and Distinguished Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Mountaire Farms, a poultry company on Delmarva, I am writing to express support of SB 540, the Member-Regulated Cooperatives/Rural Broadband for the Eastern Shore Act of 2020.

The bill proposes to allow Choptank Electrical Cooperative to become a "Member Regulated Cooperative" in order to relieve regulatory and economic hurdles to incentivize broadband deployment to the home. As a "Member Regulated Cooperative" decisions regarding rates and additional services, like broadband, would be made by the Board of Directors with input and direction from the members of the cooperative.

To date, universal broadband internet service has not been offered to many rural residents of Maryland's Eastern Shore. Choptank Electric already serves many of those same rural residents with electric service, and as a not-for-profit makes a compelling case that they can do the same with broadband.

Mountaire Farms, the sixth largest chicken company in the United States, employs more than 5,000 people in the region, helping to create 35,000 indirect jobs related to our business on Delmarva. Mountaire Farms partners with nearly 575 family farms to grow our chickens, and we purchase our grain from hundreds of local farmers living in rural areas. Access to information and commerce through broadband is critical to these small business owners.

In the agricultural industry, remaining competitive means having access to the most up to date technology available. Offering rural residents access to Broadband service will help them to address many fundamental daily tasks that are now moving toward a more internet based system of delivery.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phillip Plylar".

Phillip Plylar
President,
Mountaire Farms



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"We measure quality by how well we service our internal and external customers"