



## TESTIMONY

Submitted by  
**Dr. Theresa B. Felder, President**  
**Harford Community College**

### **HB 1328 - Economic Development - Broadband Providers - Joint Trenching and Fee (Building Out Broadband Act of 2021)**

#### **Position: Support**

Harford Community College fully supports HB 1328, **Economic Development - Broadband Providers - Joint Trenching and Fee (Building Out Broadband Act of 2021)**. The implementation of high-speed, universal broadband access is essential for the 21<sup>st</sup>-century infrastructure that supports economic competitiveness and quality of life.

Since the pandemic began last March, having access to a broadband connection became of paramount importance to Harford Community College students. Overnight students from all over the county were reporting difficulty participating in remote learning due to insufficient or weak broadband connections. To meet the needs of our students, and to ensure that teaching and learning continued without interruption, the College invested a portion of the U.S. Department of Education's CARES Act HEERF funding to purchase and make available hot spots for our students in need.

In April 2020, Columbia Telecommunications Corporation published a "*Broadband Strategic Plan*" for Harford County Government. The report discovered, based on a wide range of data, the County had a substantial number of unserved households. This study confirmed what many in the County already knew regarding the lack of broadband access, and that the County's North End, which is more rural and less populated, is particularly unserved by broadband access.

I support this legislation and hope that you will consider providing your support as well. If you have any questions, you may reach me at 443-412-2475 or [tfelder@harford.edu](mailto:tfelder@harford.edu).

Sincerely,

Theresa B. Felder, Ed.D.  
President