



House Bill 382

Position: Unfavorable

Committee: Economic Matters

Date: February 12, 2026

Founded in 1968, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce (“Maryland Chamber”) is a statewide coalition of more than 7,000 members working to develop and promote strong public policy that ensures sustained economic growth and opportunity for all Marylanders.

House Bill 382 (HB 382) would require each broadband provider serving 10,000 or more customers to establish a low-income consumer program that would be subject to artificial price controls and burdensome regulations. As a result, Maryland HB 382 would make it more difficult for broadband companies to accurately forecast revenues and justify new or expanded investment in Maryland.

Maryland is a national leader in broadband coverage and performance, consistently ranking among the top states for high-speed internet accessibility and overall broadband infrastructure, speed, and access. Additionally, prices for broadband services have sharply declined even as the prices for other consumer goods and services have risen, coupled with faster speeds and improved consumer value.

HB 382 would introduce artificial price controls into the broadband market that will have unintended negative consequences. Studies show that price floor, rate-setting types of policies often hurt the consumers they are intending to help. Examples include gasoline price mandates in Hawaii resulting in higher costs for consumers; rent-control markets across the country seeing reduced investment and a lack of housing options; and price caps on interchange fees leading to higher costs and fewer low-income consumer benefits.

HB 382 would jeopardize Maryland’s BEAD funding. In November 2025, NTIA Administrator Arielle Roth publicly affirmed that the agency would withhold BEAD funds from states that attempt to impose price regulations on BEAD providers. A California bill similar to HB 382 was pulled by its sponsor over fears that it would jeopardize the state’s BEAD allocation. Additionally, Virginia decided not to pursue legislation similar to HB 382 due to concerns over the potential loss of BEAD funding.

HB 382 could potentially violate federal law by regulating wireless pricing and would create administrative burdens and privacy concerns regarding eligibility. These flaws could embroil Maryland in costly litigation and provide regulatory uncertainty that discourages investment.

In sum, forcing broadband providers to offer their services at a price that is artificially low and likely below the actual cost of providing and maintaining the service is not sustainable. Providers cannot simply absorb this loss without changing other aspects of their businesses, to the detriment of consumers generally. **For these reasons, the Maryland Chamber of Commerce respectfully opposes HB 382.**

