



February 26, 2026

Senate Finance Committee
Attn: Tammy Kraft
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB 571 - "Maryland Broadband Opportunity and Fairness Act" (Oppose)

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Hayes, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of the Computer & Communications Industry Association (CCIA), I write to respectfully oppose unless amended SB 571, in advance of the Senate Finance Committee hearing on February 26, 2026.

CCIA is an international, not-for-profit trade association representing a broad cross-section of communications and technology firms.¹ Proposed regulations on the interstate provision of digital services therefore can have a significant impact on CCIA members. CCIA represents leading technology and communications companies that invest billions of dollars annually to expand broadband access, improve network performance, and deliver innovative services to consumers across the United States.

CCIA and its members strongly support efforts to expand affordable broadband access, particularly for low-income households. These comments are focused on the bill's inapt application to satellite-based broadband services, which are regulated at the federal level and often do not include the same features and functions of wireline-based broadband services.

1. SB 571 is an inappropriate attempt by Maryland **to set retail prices in a vibrantly competitive market**. It would manipulate broadband markets through artificial pricing structures, intrusive operational mandates, and legally questionable requirements. Rather than expanding access, the bill risks discouraging deployment, slowing innovation, and increasing compliance costs that ultimately harm consumers.

2. The bill includes a **requirement** that low-cost broadband offerings "include ... at least 1.2 terabytes of data storage." Data storage is typically a component of wireline broadband service. The bill would impose an obligation on satellite services that they might not provide. Moreover, apart from the incongruity of forcing satellite services to add a feature they do not provide, this provision raises additional legal concerns. This provision appears intended to extend to email hosting and/or cloud-based storage, which are products distinct from the broadband services that carry them. Here SB 571 runs into serious jurisdictional problems: the state has authority to regulate the terms and conditions under which telecommunications service is provided, but not the information services that are carried via telecommunications.

¹ For more than 50 years, CCIA has promoted open markets, open systems, and open networks. CCIA members employ more than 1.6 million workers, invest more than \$100 billion in research and development, and contribute trillions of dollars in productivity to the global economy. A list of CCIA members is available at <https://www.ccianet.org/members>.



3. Similar to the provision just discussed, SB 571 includes a requirement that satellite-based broadband must allow customers to buy “broadband service **bundled with cable television** or phone service.” This bundling mandate is another bad fit: not all providers of satellite-based broadband want to provide video programming. Though wireline-based service is often bundled, assuming that satellite-based service involves bundling is a mistake. This provision would interfere with providers’ product design, pricing, and marketing decisions, and represents an unnecessary intrusion into the competitive broadband marketplace.

4. The **bill’s definitions are internally inconsistent** and create significant uncertainty for covered providers. “Broadband service” is defined expansively to include nearly all modern broadband offerings, while the definition of “provider” is circular and conflicting. The bill initially applies to providers serving more than 10,000 customers, yet later exempts providers serving fewer than 20,000 customers from the low-income mandate. These inconsistencies make compliance difficult and invite arbitrary enforcement.

5. Beginning December 1, 2026, SB 571 would require ISPs serving more than 20,000 customers to offer a low-cost broadband option to low-income consumers at mandated speeds tied to household size—100 Mbps/20 Mbps for households of two or fewer, and 200 Mbps/20 Mbps for households of three or more. The bill provides **no clear mechanism for verifying household size**, leaving providers without workable guidance and exposing them to compliance risk. Additionally, unlike similar statutes in other states, SB 571 does not specify a rate, effectively creating artificial pricing through regulatory uncertainty.

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For these reasons, CCIA respectfully urges the Committee to oppose SB 571. We remain committed to working with policymakers on solutions that expand broadband access while preserving competition, innovation, and lawful regulatory boundaries.

Sincerely,

Megan Stokes

State Policy Director

Computer & Communications Industry Association