



February 18, 2013

The Honorable Don Parsons
Chairman, House Energy, Utilities
& Telecommunications Committee
401-F State Capitol
Atlanta, GA 30334

Re: HB 282

Dear Chairman Parsons:

We, the private-sector companies and trade associations listed below, urge you to **oppose HB 282** because this bill will harm both the public and private sectors, stifle economic growth, prevent the creation or retention of thousands of jobs, hamper work force development, and diminish the quality of life in Georgia. In particular, HB 282 will hurt the private sector in several ways: by curtailing public-private partnerships; by stifling the ability of private companies to sell equipment and services to public broadband providers; and by impairing economic and educational opportunities that contribute to a skilled workforce from which businesses across the state will benefit.

The United States must compete in a global economy in which affordable access to advanced communications networks is playing an increasingly significant role. As Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski recently noted in calling for broadband providers and state and municipal community leaders to come together to develop at least one gigabit community in all 50 states by 2015, "The U.S. needs a critical mass of gigabit communities nationwide so that innovators can develop next-generation applications and services that will drive economic growth and global competitiveness."

The private sector alone cannot enable the United States to take full advantage of the opportunities that advanced communications networks can create in virtually every area of life. As a result, federal and state efforts are taking place across the Nation, including Georgia, to deploy both private and public broadband infrastructure to stimulate and support economic development and job creation, especially in economically distressed areas. HB 282 would prevent public broadband providers from building the sorely needed advanced broadband infrastructure that will stimulate local businesses development, foster work force retraining, and boost employment in economically underachieving areas.

Consistent with these expressions of national unity, public entities in Georgia and across America are ready, willing, and able to do their share to bring affordable high-capacity broadband connectivity to all Americans. Enactment of direct or effective barriers to public broadband initiatives, including HB 282, would be counterproductive to the achievement of these goals. HB 282 is also inconsistent with America's National Broadband Plan, which calls on States to remove existing barriers to community broadband initiatives and to refrain from enacting new ones.

We support strong, fair and open competition to ensure that users can enjoy the widest range of choices and opportunities. HB 282 is a step in the wrong direction. It is bad for Georgia's communities, bad for Georgia's private sector, particularly high-technology companies, and bad for America's global competitiveness. **Please oppose HB 282 and any amendment or other measure that could significantly impair community broadband deployments or public-private partnerships in Georgia.**

Sincerely,

Alcatel-Lucent
American Public Power Association
Atlantic Engineering
Fiber to the Home Council
Gigabit Squared
Google
National Association of Telecom-
munications Officers and Advisors
OnTrac
Southeast Association of Telecom-
munications Officers and Advisors
Telecommunications Industry Association
Utilities Telecom Council

cc: Members of the House Energy, Utilities
& Telecommunications Committee
Marcia Rubensohn