



CITY OF WILSON
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ADMINISTRATION



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Wilson Urges FCC Preemption of NC's State Law Barrier to Broadband

The City of Wilson has filed a petition with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), asking that it exercise its preemption authority under Section 706 of the Telecommunications Act, with respect to a North Carolina law restricting municipal broadband. The law was passed in 2011 at the request of Time Warner Cable and other cable companies to restrict cities from providing broadband services. Wilson's system was partially grandfathered under the law but is restricted from providing services outside of Wilson County. The City's electric system operates in six counties and the City has received numerous requests for its broadband services from residents, government agencies, businesses, and other organizations outside of its home county.

Wilson's community broadband system is a 100% fiber optics network -- the first of its kind in NC -- that trades under the name "Greenlight" and has been in operation since 2008. The City also became "NC's Gigabit City" in 2013, by becoming the first City to offer gigabit speed internet service for residential customers.

Will Aycock, Greenlight's operations manager said "Wilson's fiber system provides many benefits to the community -- including enhanced economic development and competitiveness, educational opportunity, public safety, homeland security, energy efficiency, environmental protection and sustainability, affordable modern health care, quality government services, and the many other advantages that contribute to a high quality of life. The public demand for these services is there and the system has shown steady growth since its inception. In fact, Greenlight was recently cited by financial analysts as a positive factor in Wilson's credit ratings."

Wilson's mayor, C. Bruce Rose, who has been in office since 1992 says he has seen the City invest in significant public infrastructure during his tenure. "I have seen Wilson evolve from "the World's Greatest Tobacco Market" to "NC's First Gigabit City." We have continuously invested and re-invested in public facilities. Years ago, our City Council saw fiber optics as the public infrastructure of the future and absolutely essential to improve the economy, provide jobs and improve our quality of life, he said. Greenlight has been a great example of the benefits that community broadband can provide for a city. The City's petition seeks to remove the significant operational barriers imposed by the state law so that Greenlight can continue to thrive and serve our community."

The City's petition to the FCC says that the state law restricting municipal broadband is inconsistent with the federal Telecommunications Act and should be determined to be unenforceable.