

For Immediate Release

July 10, 2019

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As the Pennsylvania Legislature breaks for the summer, the PA Partnership for 5G issued the following statement in response to the PA House of Representatives' delay in advancing HB 1400, the Small Wireless Facilities Deployment Act:

"Members of the PA Partnership for 5G are concerned that the delay in advancing HB 1400, the Small Wireless Facilities Deployment Act, jeopardizes the economic development and competitiveness of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Despite a three year-long discussion that has brought wireless carriers, policy makers, infrastructure providers, and municipal organizations to the table, Pennsylvania continues to drag its feet in enacting legislation that would establish a uniform, predictable, and consistent deployment process. As of today, 26 other states have already passed statewide legislation, with other states expected to follow suit in the coming months.

HB 1400 allows municipalities to continue to control the right of way in a number of ways. Namely, it only regulates wireless facilities at or a certain height and allows municipalities to maintain local zoning control when wireless facilities exceed predetermined heights. Also, it provides protections for historic districts and requires a provider to demonstrate that it cannot collocate on an existing structure before placing a new structure.

HB 1400 will establish an application fee that allows municipalities to cover their costs relative to the processing of applications; grant municipalities a reasonable amount of time to review applications; and require infrastructure providers to consider the aesthetic of a neighborhood in their design. Municipalities that oppose HB 1400 or that may seek a carve-out are jeopardizing their community's timely access to 5G technology. Moreover, they are causing a further delay in expanding this technology to more rural parts of the state, further exacerbating the concurrent issues surrounding the lack of rural broadband.

5G service is being deployed at a faster rate in cities whose states have already adopted statewide legislation. Pennsylvania consumers will be supremely disappointed that steps were not taken to provide them with timely access to the next generation of wireless technology.

As CTIA pointed out during their testimony before the House Consumer Affairs Committee last month, "in Pennsylvania, 5G deployment in a community like Philadelphia may create over 14,700 jobs and increase GDP by \$1.3 billion, and in a community like Bethlehem may create over 700 jobs and increase GDP by over \$60 million."¹

¹ See https://www.legis.state.pa.us/WU01/LI/TR/Transcripts/2019_0076_0009_TSTMNY.pdf; last accessed 7/1/2019.

The State Legislature's decision to postpone this vote further into the future is a disservice to Pennsylvania consumers – those of us who own a smartphone or tablet, homeowners who no longer maintain a landline, small business owners who depend upon a reliable connection to process payments, the student who struggles to submit their homework online, the doctors and technologists who are trying to provide affordable and accessible healthcare via telemedicine applications, and the first responder whose chief concern is to ensure the public's safety. The list goes on. HB 1400 should be swiftly enacted following summer recess so that Pennsylvania is prepared to take advantage of the benefits that 5G will provide."