

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Ashley Henry Shook, (412) 352-8885, ashley@mulberrypa.com

Pennsylvania Enacts Small Cell Legislation, a Key Step on the Road to 5G
Bipartisan bill streamlines regulatory process to spur 5G infrastructure deployment

PITTSBURGH, PA – Earlier today Governor Tom Wolf signed H.B. 1621, the Small Wireless Facilities Deployment Act, after the Legislature swiftly introduced and approved the bill earlier this month. It passed the House by a vote of 198-3, and 50-0 in the Senate. The bill establishes a statewide process to deploy small cell nodes, the infrastructure required to support 5G networks. With the adoption of H.B. 1621, Pennsylvania became the 32nd state in the country to enact legislation.

The bill establishes an application fee that allows municipalities to cover their costs relative to the processing of applications; provides municipalities a reasonable amount of time to review applications; and requires infrastructure providers to consider the aesthetic of a neighborhood in their design.

“The passage of H.B. 1621 cements Pennsylvania's reputation as an innovation leader and positions the state to secure funds from the \$275 billion in private capital available to build 5G networks across the country,” said Ashley Henry Shook, spokesperson for the PA Partnership for 5G. “The ability to have reliable wireless access is fundamental to the health and economic vitality of every community, household, and business. We're proud of the Legislature's bipartisan adoption of public policy that creates jobs, supports economic growth, and improves our ability to connect,” she added.

Over the past four years wireless carriers, policy makers, infrastructure providers, municipal organizations, and labor have collaborated to create a bill that balances municipal concerns with industry considerations. H.B. 1621 allows municipalities to continue to control the right of way. Namely, it only regulates wireless facilities at a certain height and allows municipalities to maintain local zoning control when wireless facilities exceed predetermined heights. The bill also provides protections for historic districts and requires a provider to demonstrate that it cannot collocate on an existing structure before placing a new structure.

“The development of H.B. 1621 was a collaborative process that showcases how the wireless infrastructure industry, labor, and government can work together to ensure Pennsylvanians have access to the transformative potential of 5G,” said Karen Rohrkemper, Vice President of Design, Construction & Operations for the Central Region at Crown Castle. “Now that we have uniform regulations in place, Crown Castle looks forward to playing a key role in giving Pennsylvanians the connectivity they deserve.”

Industry associations such as CTIA and WIA have outlined the economic impact 5G will have on the Commonwealth. According to CTIA, “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

“WIA commends Pennsylvania for enacting small cell legislation as the nation races to 5G. The legislation modernizes and streamlines Pennsylvania’s rules for small cell deployment and lays the groundwork needed for jobs, economic growth, public safety, telemedicine, and distance learning across the state,” said WIA President and CEO Jonathan Adelstein.

Additional statements from members of the PA Partnership for 5G members are as follows:

“As part of our member-driven Bringing PA Back recovery initiative, we are advocating for modernized infrastructure to position this state for continued economic growth and improved competitiveness. We are incredibly encouraged to see this bill become law after a strong, bipartisan vote in both chambers. It will pave the way for an accelerated deployment of technology that will ease data congestion on the existing networks and encourage the next generation of wireless and broadband technologies. The number of innovative, data-intensive applications that 5G technology can help our economy unlock, including advances in health care, public safety, manufacturing and transportation, will leverage our state’s existing strengths into new opportunities for Pennsylvanians across the Commonwealth.”

- Gene Barr, President and CEO, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry

“The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, an affiliate of the Allegheny Conference, applauds the passage of HB 1621. Connectivity, including 5G expansion, has been at the top of our state policy agenda. Southwestern Pennsylvania’s business community views this as not only a competitiveness issue, but also a quality of life and equity issue. It’s essential that the region has the connectivity infrastructure and technology that employers need and want, but also that our residents and communities can affordably and reliably access the same to connect to school, work, healthcare and more.”

- Jenn Beer, Vice President of Government Affairs, Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce

“Pennsylvania’s union electrical contractors are thrilled that Governor Wolf signed House Bill 1621 into law this week. We look forward to a standardized permitting process so we can help bring 5G technology—and its associated local jobs and long-term economic benefits—to communities across the Commonwealth.”

- Joelle Salerno, Government Affairs Director, Western PA Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA)

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

About the PA Partnership for 5G

The Pennsylvania Partnership for 5G aims to educate different sectors about 5G technology and the infrastructure it requires. The Partnership brings together various leaders from a diverse set of industries and constituencies to help forge a technologically progressive Pennsylvania.

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