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February 2, 2021

Honorable Representative Drew Hanson
and Members of the Washington State
House of Representatives

Dear Representative Hanson:

We, the private-sector companies and national organizations listed below, applaud you and your fellow sponsors for introducing HB1336 and working toward its prompt enactment. Please feel free to share this letter with whomever you believe can help you achieve that goal.

As the Coronavirus pandemic and its economic dislocations have reinforced for us all, robust broadband access to the Internet is essential to home-based work, education, health care, social interaction, and so much more. Like electricity, advanced communications services and capabilities are platforms, drivers,

and enablers of simultaneous progress in just about everything that matters to communities. This includes economic vitality, lifelong educational opportunity, workforce training and retraining, affordable modern health care, public safety, smart transportation, efficient government service, digital equity, democratic engagement, and the many other benefits that contribute to a high quality of life. HB1336 would remove the restrictions in current Washington law that prevent public entities from doing their part to help bring these advantages to their communities.

While the harm that the current restrictions have done to localities across Washington should be obvious, the injury to the private sector may not be. In fact, these restrictions have hampered the private sector in multiple ways. They have interfered with the ability of private companies to make timely sales of equipment and services to public networks. They have impaired the ability of private companies to use advanced public networks to offer businesses and residential customers an endless array of modern products and services. They have also impeded private companies from entering into creative public-private partnerships that benefit all concerned.

It is also of critical importance that the United States must compete in a global economy in which high capacity communications networks are playing an increasingly significant role. We need affordable access to advanced communications networks in as many communities as possible, as rapidly as possible, so that innovators can develop next-generation applications and services that will drive America's global competitiveness. As Senator John McCain said on the US Senate floor a few years ago in the course of introducing a bill that would have invalidated all state barriers to public broadband initiatives, "As a country, we cannot afford to cut off any successful strategy if we want to remain internationally competitive."

Washington's public utility districts, port districts, municipalities, counties, and other public entities are eager to do their part to help accelerate the deployment, adoption, and use of advanced communications services and capabilities. These issues fundamentally affect local communities and should be addressed at the local and regional level, through the processes that local leaders ordinarily use for making comparable decisions.

For all of these reasons, **we strongly support HB1336 and urge its prompt passage.**

Sincerely,

Atlantic Engineering Group
Coalition for Local Internet Choice
Common Sense
Consumer Reports
CTC Energy & Technology
Electronic Freedom Foundation
Fiber Broadband Association
Google Fiber
Institute for Local Self Reliance

National Association of Telecommunications
Officers and Advisors
Next Century Cities
Nokia
OnTrac
Ting Internet
ThinkBig Networks
Utilities Technology Council
Wyyerd Group