



THE ASSEMBLY  
STATE OF NEW YORK  
ALBANY

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER  
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Higher Education  
Tourism, Parks, Arts and  
Sports Development

JACOB C. ASHBY  
Assemblyman 107<sup>th</sup> District

PLEASE REPLY TO

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May 8, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo  
Governor, State of New York  
Executive Chamber, State Capitol  
Albany, New York 12224

The Honorable Carl Heastie  
Speaker, New York State Assembly  
Legislative Office Building, Room 932  
Albany, New York 12248

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
Majority Leader, New York State Senate  
Legislative Office Building, Room 907  
Albany, New York 12247

The Honorable John Flanagan  
Minority Leader, New York State Senate  
Legislative Office Building, Room 909  
Albany, New York 12247

Mr. John B. Rhodes  
Chair, New York State Public Service Commission  
3 Empire State Plaza  
Albany, NY 12223

Dear Governor Cuomo, Legislative Leaders & Chairman Rhodes:

As State officials, the past few months have been some of the most challenging we have ever faced. The COVID-19 pandemic has created unforeseen obstacles and exposed weaknesses in our State's infrastructure. One weakness brought to light is that New York's current

broadband infrastructure in many areas cannot meet the demands of millions of New Yorkers working and learning from home every day during this pandemic.

Despite efforts to expand broadband services, New York still has many underserved areas. Members of the Assembly Republican Conference are very thankful that private companies have stepped up and provided free broadband services where possible. Now it is the State government's turn to step up and take the steps necessary to ensure that broadband services are made available to all New Yorkers in every region of the State, both urban and rural.

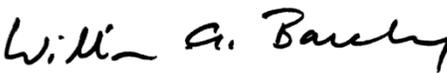
Our recommendations to expand broadband access to underserved communities are to:

- Ensure critical infrastructure workers providing access to broadband are considered essential as the State opens up regionally.
- Through the regional reopening process:
  - Utilize school district reopening plans to help identify students and areas that had access problems during the recent distance learning experience.
  - Have businesses include the status of their internet access in their reopening plans.
  - Require the State to submit a report to the Legislature and public detailing the data received through the regional reopening process.
  - Take the information and create a new State-level broadband map to provide a more detailed overview of areas that lack access.
- Create a hotline to allow individuals to report their lack of access to internet services.
- Create a fair allocation process to ensure that money received from the federal government is allocated to underserved areas, especially rural upstate New York.
  - Any funding we receive should prioritize hardwired broadband over any expansion of satellite, as it provides a more reliable service for customers.
- Waive any regulatory barriers to expanding broadband lines and access during the COVID pandemic, and for one year following the expiration of the emergency period.

This pandemic has taught us that we must prepare today for the challenges of tomorrow. We need to make broadband available to all New Yorkers. Thank you for your prompt consideration of this important matter.

Gratefully,

  
Jake Ashby  
107<sup>th</sup> Assembly District

  
Will Barclay  
Assembly Minority Leader



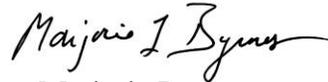
Ken Blankenbush  
117<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Karl Brabenec  
98<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Kevin Byrnes  
94<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Marjorie Byrnes  
133<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District



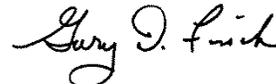
Clifford W. Crouch  
122<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



Joe DeStefano  
3<sup>rd</sup> Assembly District



David DiPietro  
147<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



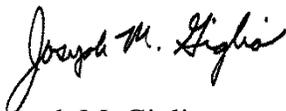
Gary D. Finch  
126<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Michael Fitzpatrick  
8<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



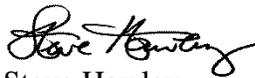
Christopher S. Friend  
124<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Joseph M. Giglio  
148<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Andy Goodell  
150<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Steve Hawley  
139<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mark Johns  
135<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Brian M. Kolb  
131<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



Kieran Michael Lalor  
105<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Peter Lawrence  
134<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Mike LiPetri  
9<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



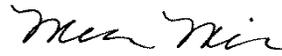
Brian Manktelow  
130<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Dave McDonough  
14<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Brian Miller  
101<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



Melissa "Missy" Miller  
20<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Michael Montesano  
15<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Angelo Merinello  
145<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



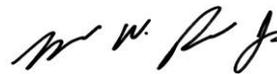
Mike Norris  
144<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Phil Palmesano  
132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



Anthony Palumbo  
2<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



Mike Reilly  
62<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



John Salka  
121<sup>st</sup> Assembly District



Colin Schmitt  
99<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Doug Smith  
5<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



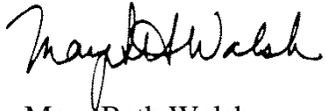
Robert Smullen  
118<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Daniel Stec  
114<sup>th</sup> Assembly District



Chris Tague  
102<sup>nd</sup> Assembly District



Mary Beth Walsh  
112<sup>th</sup> Assembly District