

Commonwealth of Kentucky

KENTUCKY SENATE

31ST DISTRICT
P.O. Box 2801
PIKEVILLE, KENTUCKY 41502



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FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY 40601-3448
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Phillip.Wheeler@LRC.ky.gov

SENATOR PHILLIP WHEELER

October 15, 2020

Kentucky Public Service Commission
211 Sower Blvd.
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Kentucky Public Service Commissioners:

RE: Pole Attachment Regulations

I represent Kentucky's eastern-most Senate district, covering multiple counties from Elliott down to Pike. Set in the Appalachian Mountains, District 31 residents have adapted to unique challenges over the years to remain connected. They've adapted even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has proven especially challenging for rural residents who have insufficient or no internet access at all.

It's important that we take positive steps to assist communities in Kentucky that are stuck on the wrong side of the digital divide, unable to take advantage of vital educational and business opportunities. In this regard, the Public Service Commission's current proceeding on utility pole regulations could have a great impact on residents in my district. The utility poles help make internet/broadband possible.

This proceeding serves as an opportunity to streamline access to the infrastructure needed to bring broadband expansion to all corners of the state. Expanding broadband in a timely, cost-effective manner depends on a provider's ability to efficiently access utility poles. That is why I support efforts to improve access to this critical infrastructure and significantly accelerate broadband deployment in unserved communities.

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As the Commission works to close out this proceeding, I urge you to consider residents in parts of the Commonwealth who have struggled without internet access for years, even before the pandemic. Improving access to utility poles would move us one step closer to helping communities like those in my district.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me should you have questions or if I may be of assistance. I may be reached at (502) 564-8100, extension 1634, Phillip.Wheeler@lrc.ky.gov, or by mail at Kentucky General Assembly, Capitol Annex, Room 253, 702 Capital Avenue, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601-3448.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Phillip Wheeler". The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "W".

Phillip Wheeler
State Senator, 31st District