

RECEIVED

SEP 08 2020

PUBLIC SERVICE
COMMISSION

Members of the Kentucky Public Service Commission
P.O. Box 615
211 Sowers Blvd.
Frankfort, KY 40602
Re: Broadband in Western Kentucky

Commissioners,

I am writing to show my support of Kenergy's broadband deployment project. I want regulated electric cooperatives to be able to provide high-speed broadband services to my community, just as municipals and TVA cooperatives do today. Our community has limited, if any, availability to reliable, high-speed internet. This critical infrastructure is essential to business, healthcare, education and quality of life.

Extending broadband services to rural areas is the modern-day equivalent of rural electrification in the 1930's. Electric cooperatives have existing infrastructure throughout our region, which makes a perfect fit to be a broadband service provider. I am requesting your approval of Kenergy's request for a waiver, which will expedite this project in a timely manner, ensuring electric cooperatives can secure financing for the buildout.

In Miami Florida a 1 GIGBIT fiber connection will cost you \$80.00 per month. That connection will let you run a business, stream television and voice, and do anything on the internet you could possibly need to do.

In Western Kentucky that same connection, if available at all, will cost you \$1100.00.

Internet service, it is the new electricity. Houses in rural Kentucky are simply worth less because the lack of connectivity.

Metropolitan areas like San Jose and San Francisco California along with Houston Texas are seeing a mass exodus of IT and Information workers. Those workers could relocate to any area with sufficient broadband service and begin paying taxes to those state and local governments. Unfortunately, not Western Kentucky.

The biggest barrier to last mile internet is infrastructure. Taxpayers and voters are not asking for superhighways, dams, or any type of major infrastructure project. We are simply asking that a company with existing infrastructure be able to use it to compete in the broadband service space where so many other providers have decided not to even after accepting taxpayer funding.


Connect America Funding 1 and 2, in my opinion, failed to meet its intended goal of bringing broadband to underserved rural communities in twenty states with Kentucky being number four on the list of underserved. AT&T alone is reported to have gained 315 million from the grant and Western Kentucky is no better for it. Had that money

been directed to a company with the infrastructure Kenergy has in place today it could have had a far greater impact.

Kenergy is positioned perfectly to be a last mile internet provider. A partnership between major broadband middle mile providers like AT&T, Sprint, and Windstream and last mile providers like Kenergy is what the communities need. In business you look for the win, win, win and we have it here. Major providers sell access to middle mile internet connections, Kenergy delivers the last mile for a fee, taxpayers get quality internet service. Kenergy is a coop, if the internet service business is successful there is a good chance it could offset rising electricity cost.

Thank you for your consideration of this important project, one that will positively impact my community and transform western Kentucky.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Barkley Hughes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Paul Barkley Hughes

58 BROADWAY ST.
MARION, KY 42064

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