



Wireless
Infrastructure
Association

Testimony of

Arturo Chang
Senior Counsel, State Government Affairs
Wireless Infrastructure Association

Before the

Senate Communications and Technology Committee

Wednesday, April 28, 2021

Dear Chairs Phillips-Hill and Kane and Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Wireless Infrastructure Association (WIA) to express our strong support for the latest agreement with the municipal associations that would modernize the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's processes to expedite the deployment of advanced wireless services. WIA is the principal trade association representing the businesses that build, develop, own, and operate the wireless infrastructure in Pennsylvania and throughout the U.S. WIA advocates for the widespread, responsible deployment of wireless infrastructure to enable mobile broadband access for communities everywhere, particularly in the global race to 5G.

The latest agreement is a balanced approach that encourages deployment of small 5G infrastructure while ensuring that localities retain the necessary authority to regulate the continuity of structures being built in the public rights-of-way. A state-wide, streamlined approach provides greater predictability that will encourage private investment in these next generation networks. This effort will usher in 5G and advanced wireless services that will create jobs, stimulate local economies, and bring efficiencies in local government services, from trash collection to traffic management.

Pennsylvania consumers rely on wireless networks and are dependent on being connected in their everyday lives. There is an even deeper recognition of how essential reliable wireless connectivity is to every household and to every industry due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The wireless industry's network investments powered the economy throughout the past year with connectivity more in-demand than ever. Our members helped businesses to stay afloat, children to continue learning, and doctors to see patients. Activities such as working from home, remote learning, and telehealth are now prevalent and they all rely on wireless connectivity, anchored by wireless



infrastructure, to operate. Importantly, the wireless industry is working around the clock to keep the nation connected.

The latest agreement would also bring many telecommunications jobs to the Commonwealth. WIA is deeply committed to developing skilled workforce to build and maintain current and future wireless networks through the training and education programs it offers. As the national sponsor of the Department of Labor (DOL) - registered Telecommunications Industry Registered Apprenticeship Program (TIRAP), WIA has defined career paths in a growing number of critical occupations, including wireless technicians and installers. Since 2017, the program has registered nearly 2,500 apprentices from 51 employers. In 2020, WIA received a grant from DOL to expand TIRAP. In addition, DOL named WIA as the only industry intermediary for registered apprenticeship to lead in workforce development for the telecommunications industry with a focus on underrepresented populations, including veterans, women, and people of color. TIRAP currently has registered 11 occupations.

WIA also maintains the Telecommunications Education Center (TEC), a dynamic learning program devoted to improving education, quality of work, and safety within the telecommunications industry. TEC courses are designed to equip the workforce with the latest technical information about wireless communications and network development. Subject areas include Wireless fundamentals, DAS & Small Cell, In-building, Wireless Safety and 5G outlook. TEC is a resource for industry training, education institutions, and workforce agencies.

I have personally worked with many of the present stakeholders for over four years. Back then, only eleven states had enacted small cell legislation. And now, twenty additional states have enacted a small cell bill availing themselves to the investment and benefits that advanced wireless networks bring. Many other states are also currently considering similar legislation. The time is ripe for Pennsylvania to have a comprehensive approach to small wireless facilities.

Thank you again, Chairs Phillips-Hill and Kane and Members of the Committee, for holding this hearing. WIA appreciates your consideration as the nation remains competitive in the global race to 5G.

#