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AARP North Carolina asks you to oppose Bill HB 1587

“The Local Government Fair Competition Act”

House Bill 1587 establishes rules for the ownership and operation of local government communications services.

AARP opposes HB 1587 because it is overly burdensome. Its many operating limitations would severely impede a local government's ability to provide communications services, including municipal broadband. The bill would essentially require a city to pay itself property taxes on the entire city hall building if one office is used to assist in providing broadband services. HB 1587 represents bad public policy.

HB 1587 Would Forestall Creation of Community Broadband Networks

Community broadband networks offer the promise of increased economic development and jobs, enhanced market competition, improved delivery of e-government services, and universal, affordable Internet access for all Americans. Locally deployed technologies can help first responders, volunteers, hospitals, and local governments react quickly to disasters, particularly when old ways of communicating no longer work.

HB 1587 Would Deny Local Governments the Flexibility to Meet Community Needs

Local governments must maintain the right to own, operate or deploy their own broadband network and services. More importantly, they must be able to develop networks that make sense for their communities, including public-private partnerships and systems wholly owned by municipalities. The General Assembly should ensure that all residential consumers have the ability to choose from among multiple, competing broadband networks.

HB 1587 is Not in the Best Interest of NC Consumers

At the turn of the last century, when the private sector failed to provide electric service to much of America, thousands of community leaders stepped forward to form their own electric utilities. Now, communities across America are ready to provide broadband access to their citizens, offering competitive alternatives for their consideration. Cities such as Philadelphia have developed creative ways to partner with the private sector. In addition, the voters of Lafayette, Louisiana rejected an effort to limit their high-speed options by a margin of 62%-38% and decided instead to fund a municipal broadband network. In referenda held across Iowa, citizens in a majority of the communities voted to preserve the authority of their local governments to develop broadband networks.