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January 31, 2017

The Honorable Jack Tate, Chair
The Honorable Tim Neville, Vice Chair
Senate Business, Labor and Technology Committee
Colorado General Assembly
200 E Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Chairman Tate and Vice Chair Neville:

We, the private-sector companies and associations listed below, urge you to pass SB 17-042. This bill would repeal the restrictions on public broadband networks and public-private partnerships that were enacted in 2005, through legislation commonly referred to as “SB 152.” Those restrictions have harmed both the public and private sectors by retarding or delaying economic growth, preventing the creation or retention of jobs around the State, particularly in rural areas, hampering workforce development, and diminishing the quality of life in Colorado.

In particular, SB 152 has hampered the private sector in multiple ways. Among other things, it has unnecessarily complicated and delayed public-private partnerships. It has interfered with the ability of private companies to make timely sales of equipment and services to public broadband providers. Delaying the ability to enter into these public-private partnerships effectively denies private companies timely access to advanced networks over which they could offer businesses and residential customers an endless array of modern products and services. These kinds of delays can also impair economic and educational opportunities that contribute to a skilled workforce that would benefit existing and new businesses across the state.

The United States must compete in a global economy in which high capacity communications networks are playing an increasingly significant role. We need affordable access to advanced communications networks in as many communities as possible, as rapidly as possible, so that innovators can develop next-generation applications and services that will drive economic growth and global competitiveness. Unfortunately, in many communities in Colorado and across America, particularly in rural areas, the current communications service providers are unable or unwilling to invest in advanced communications networks rapidly enough to enable the communities to stay abreast of their peers elsewhere in America and around the world. Communities should be free of artificial barriers, such as those erected by SB 152, to be able to do their part to help bring affordable high-capacity broadband connectivity to all Americans and to advance America's global competitiveness.

Communities in Colorado are eager to work with willing established carriers, enter into public-private partnerships with new entrants, develop their own networks, if necessary, or create other innovative means of acquiring affordable access to advanced communications capabilities. These are fundamentally local decisions that should be made by the communities themselves, through the processes that their duly elected and accountable local officials ordinarily use for making comparable decisions. They should also be able to use their own resources as they deem appropriate to foster economic development, educational opportunity, public safety, and much more, without having to comply with the bottlenecks that SB 152 imposed.

We support strong, fair, and open competition to ensure that users can enjoy the widest range of choices and opportunities. Passage of SB 17-042 would be a step in the right direction. It is good for Colorado communities, particularly rural communities, good for the private sector, particularly high-technology companies, and good for America's global competitiveness. **Please pass SB 17-042.**

Sincerely,

Atlantic Engineering	Netflix
Coalition for Local Internet Choice	Next Century Cities
CTC Energy & Technology	Nokia
Fiber to the Home Council	OnTrac
Google	Telecommunications Industry Association
Indeed	Ting Internet
Internet Association	Utilities Technology Council
National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors	

cc: Members of the Senate Business, Labor and Technology Committee
The Honorable Lucia Guzman
The Honorable Kerry Donovan