



February 21, 2021

Submitted via e-mail to: Committee chair and clerk.

Chair Ruggiero and esteemed Members of the House Committee on Innovation, Internet, & Technology,

We are writing to share our experiences as business owners on Aquidneck Island. The current state of online connectivity has negatively impacted our ability to conduct routine business operations on a continual basis. We have grown our business and changed with the times as the owners of our business for the past 40 years. We are urging your committee to take a hard look at the subpar connectivity issues and grow with the times as we have.

Our incumbent service provider provided such unreliable service that a few years ago our company started shifting our operations into the cloud.

Despite paying for a plan that advertises 200 Mbps downstream and 20 Mbps upstream speeds over cable, continual challenges to access these cloud services from our office location led us to search for a better solution. Just in the past month we were quoted \$975 a month for 1000 Mbps service, or \$755 a month for 500 Mbps over fiber optics.

The proposed prices are outrageous! To add insult to injury, a 60 month contract would be required, with additional one time installation fees which were quoted as high as \$7,500. A total cost close to \$60,000 over 5 years. The neighboring state of Massachusetts has invested in fiber optics expansion through the Massachusetts Broadband Institute¹. Businesses connected to the OpenCape network receive shared gigabit service for just \$117 a month.

Further complicating matters beyond pricing is ongoing connectivity problems community wide, creating challenges for our teleworking and field employees.² The lack of affordable, robust, and reliable Internet connectivity creates needless additional obstacles to navigate in an already challenging business climate.

For the reasons listed above, we wholeheartedly support H 5148. Rhode Island can and should build out our state's fiber network to all Rhode Island residences and businesses.

Respectfully, Luke and Conni Harding

¹ <https://broadband.masstech.org/>

² <https://www.eastbayri.com/stories/cox-outage-takes-portsmouth-offline,88184>