



**Testimony from Brian M. Daniels, Executive Director
In Support of Wireless Telecommunications Act, H 6151
House Committee on Innovation, Internet & Technology – April 12, 2021**

Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee, for the opportunity to testify. We appreciate Chairwoman Ruggiero's sponsorship of this bill, which would restore greater local control over the siting and permitting of wireless technology equipment.

In 2017, the General Assembly passed the Small Cell Siting Act (H5224), which was intended to improve cellular network service by expanding deployment of small cell equipment on existing towers and facilities. According to its proponents, one goal of the law was to improve the predictability of the small cell permitting process across cities and towns by setting standardized permit fees and timelines for approval. At that time, the League expressed concern about the impact of the bill's requirements regarding assets owned by the municipalities themselves. In recent years, many communities have purchased utility poles in an effort to install more energy-efficient lighting and to save taxpayer money. However, the Small Cell Siting Act limited the ability of cities and towns to manage their own assets, and we appreciate that H 6151 restores more local control and oversight.

This legislation will allow cities and towns to ensure that wireless telecommunications equipment complies with local requirements on land use, public safety and zoning, including aesthetics, landscaping, structural design and other criteria. Notably, it does not give local governments authority to deny applications based on concerns about radio frequency emissions; the Federal Communications Commission has issued rules preempting local control over those questions and therefore cannot be included in state legislation.

Finally, H 6151 extends the deadline to review and approve permit applications and also allows cities and towns to charge fees consistent with the actual costs of reviewing the application, including the costs of any technical or consulting reviews. These reviews are particularly important when placing equipment on municipal assets to ensure that there are no adverse impacts from electricity usage or other factors.

We appreciate Chairwoman Ruggiero's efforts to restore greater local control over the placement of wireless telecommunication assets, and we encourage the committee to support the legislation. Thank you for your consideration of our views.