

March 13, 2025

To the Members of the House Committee on Commerce,

My name is Angel Lopez, I am a Providence resident, and I attest my biometric information is not for sale. I write to you all in strong opposition to House Bill 5817. My immovable position is rooted in the fact that the public health of residents is not being considered within the current language of the Broadband Deployment and Investment Act.

First of all, the bill includes fixed wireless within the definition of broadband, yet the bill does not mention or mitigate the increased energy expenses created by fixed wireless facilities or wireless antennas. Currently, these wireless facilities contribute to the continuously increasing costs of energy, creating a financial burden for residents and small businesses while producing slower and less reliable internet connection speeds than wired, direct to the premises fiber optic connections.

Second, the bill allows Commerce Corporation to step in for the exclusive benefit of broadband providers without consideration for the Rhode Island residents who live on or behind "Main Street." To support my argument, I have included five photographs of wireless facilities that operate 24 hours a day that have been collocated around Providence. The photos show "intentional radiators" and "small wireless facilities" as defined by the FCC, occupying space on telephone poles inside residential neighborhoods of Providence. The contraptions in the images of which most remain unregistered are included within the definition of Broadband that appears on page 2 of this bill. I capture all the images on March 12, 2025.

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 5817



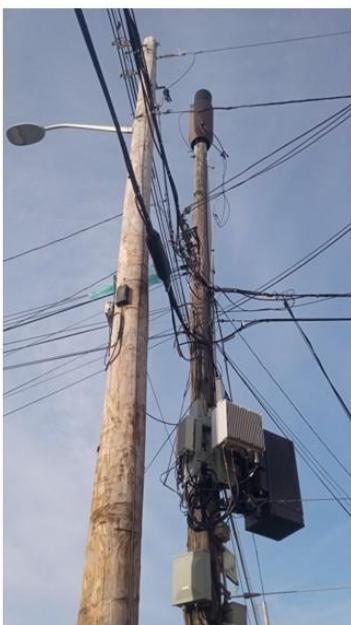
Photo of cables sprouting out of the ground and up a utility Pole on Plainfield Street in Silver Lake in Providence. They are pointing at a low-Income Family unit apartment complex.



Wireless Antenna on Wallace St. in Silver Lake in Providence. In a residential neighborhood across the street from a Park.



Wireless Antenna on Waverly Street in the West End of Providence, surrounded by multi-decker homes.



Dorchester & Viola in the Silver Lake neighborhood of Providence. 4 out of 5 homes surrounding this antenna are occupied by the home owner.



Wireless Antenna with a 5G Antenna across the street on Cranston Street a "Main Street" in the West End of Providence.

In addition, recently enacted RI General Laws §39-34 titled Vegetation Management for Electric System Reliability places the needs of RI Energy's smart meter program before the public health of residents and before the adverse impact created by wireless pollution on fauna and flora. The already existing RI General Laws §39-32 is preventing the RI Department of Health's urge to step in to measure the wireless radiation created by Small wireless facilities collocated on self-regulated property. This increases the adverse impacts of prolonged exposure to wireless radiation for the residents who live near these devices. If you have not done so already, take a close look at the photos I included above.

My third reason to oppose this bill is because of the language on page 4 line 4 enables commerce Corp to work with state and local authorities to "remove barriers to broadband infrastructure development" for the purpose of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) while protecting any of their trade secret as described on line 8 through 12 of page 4. This bill as written will allow Commerce Corp to place the needs of ISPs over the needs and Public Health of Rhode Island residents who live on and behind "Main Street." Intentional disregard for the Public Health of residents negatively impacts State and Municipal budgets.

To express the gravity of my concern I have included a link to an article published by the LA Times dating back to February 4, 2005, titled "Tapes Reveal Enron's Power Plant Rigging" by Jonathan Peterson. The direct link to the article is <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2005-feb-04-fi-enron4-story.html>. The excerpt from the article below describes how a trade secret negatively impacted the well-being of residents to support Enron's claim for the dramatic increase of energy prices for the benefit of corporate profit.

According to the newly released transcript, Enron traders on Jan. 16, 2001, hatched a plan to take an Enron-controlled power plant in Las Vegas off-line the following day. In a phone call, "Bill of Enron" informed "Rich," a Las Vegas power plant employee, that "we want you guys to get a little creative ... and come up with a reason to go down."

The shutdown, he added, was "supposed to be, ah, you know, kinda one of those things."

In an effort to cooperate, Rich responded: "OK, so we're just comin' down for some maintenance, like a forced outage type thing?"

"I think that's a good plan, Rich," Bill said. "... I knew I could count on you."

The 52-megawatt plant was out of operation for several hours the next day, when rolling blackouts plagued Northern and Central California and about half a million homes and businesses lost power. At that same time, U.S. Energy Secretary Bill Richardson had ordered suppliers to make power available in the West.

Some observers viewed the taped conversation as a window into Enron's broader strategic approach.

Through contracts with more than a dozen power plant owners, including municipal utilities in Glendale and elsewhere in California, Enron controlled 3,500 megawatts of electricity as of August 2000, according to documents uncovered by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in its investigation of Enron. That was enough electricity to serve more than 2.6 million homes.

"The fact that Enron would jeopardize the health and safety of Western citizens to chase profits in the energy market is disgraceful," Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) said Thursday. "But it's not just disgraceful on a human level -- it's also illegal."

In conclusion, I ask the Chair and all members of this committee to oppose House Bill 5817 because the legislative language does not consider the Health of the public, the current market of increasing energy costs, and because it will allow Commerce Corp to protect the best interests of Internet Service Providers while disregarding the voices and concerns of residents. The bill will also contribute to the financial burden already placed on every household in this state due to increasing energy costs while ignoring the adverse health effects of prolonged exposure to wireless radiation.

Sincerely,

Angel Lopez
Providence, RI 02909