



www.co.rockbridge.va.us

County of Rockbridge

Office of the County Administrator

150 South Main Street

Lexington, Virginia 24450

County Board of Supervisors

JOHN M. HIGGINS
Buffalo
Magisterial District

RUSSELL S. FORD
Kerrs Creek
Magisterial District

DAVID W. HINTY, JR.
Natural Bridge
Magisterial District

RONNIE R. CAMPBELL
South River
Magisterial District

ALBERT W. LEWIS, JR.
Walkers Creek
Magisterial District

SPENCER H. SUTER
County Administrator
Office: (540) 463-1460
Fax: (540) 463-4346
spencer_suter@co.rockbridge.va.us

January 25, 2017

The Honorable R. Creigh Deeds
Virginia Senate
P.O. Box 396
Richmond, Virginia 23218

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cline
Virginia House of Delegates
P.O. Box 1405
Amherst, Virginia 24521

RE: Opposition to HB2108

Dear Senator Deeds and Delegate Cline:

I am writing on behalf of the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors to ask that you vigorously oppose HB2108, introduced by Delegate Byron. As you are aware the Rockbridge region joined together to form the Rockbridge Area Network Authority (RANA), in an effort to provide true broadband services to more of our citizens and businesses, as the private market was not adequately serving either. Delegate Byron's bill is a huge step backward for provision of broadband service in the Commonwealth and would cripple RANA's ever increasing success in expanding true broadband in the Rockbridge region.

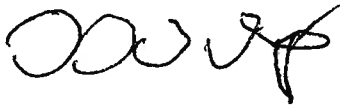
HB2108 defines high speed internet as 10/1mbps service. Please know that this does not even approach the speeds necessary for business, commerce and education in today's environment. Frankly, it does not even meet the accepted mark for internet to the home. For the sake of brevity, I won't list all of the benefits RANA has brought to our community. However, please bear in mind that prior to the implementation of RANA, none of the following could have occurred:

- 1) Rockbridge County School System – Prior to RANA, most public schools in Rockbridge County operated on highly expensive T1 circuits, each with a capacity of 1.5 mbps. Annual costs for this marginal bandwidth ranged to \$120,000. Today, County schools have a minimum of 50 mbps and up to 1 Gigabit. Further the costs were cut nearly in half.

- 2) Rockbridge area businesses – Many local businesses have taken advantage of RANA’s capacity, spurring economic development and even expansions. I can provide examples and contacts upon request.
- 3) Partnerships – RANA and BARC Electric recently agreed on a partnership in which BARC will bring “fiber to the door” opportunities to its entire service footprint. BARC will utilize the RANA backbone to deliver middle mile service, and RANA’s data center in Lexington as a base of switching operations. Absent RANA’s existence, the BARC project would likely have been at risk due to the larger initial investment required for fiber backbone.
- 4) Higher Education – W&Ls broadband speed has quadrupled at no additional cost, as a result of RANA’s existence, through creation of a true competitive market.

In closing, please know that the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors strongly opposes HB2108. We feel that the provision of true broadband service is a realm which should be left open to all forms of enhancement, both public and private. If a community recognizes a need that is unserved by the private market, it should be free to supplement the availability of services in the interest of its citizens, businesses and schools. Passage of this bad legislation, in any form, would be catastrophic for RANA, essentially reversing authority previously vested in local government.

Sincerely,



David W. Hinty, Jr., Chairman
Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Honorable Members, Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors
Spencer H. Suter, Rockbridge County Administrator
David Saacke, Chair – Rockbridge Area Network Authority
Scott Robertson, Executive Director – Rockbridge Area Network Authority