



April 20, 2009

Joe Hackney
Speaker
NC House of Representatives
2304 Legislative Building
Raleigh, NC 27601-1096

Dear Speaker Hackney,

On behalf of EDUCAUSE I ask you to oppose North Carolina Senate Bill 1004/House Bill 1252, which would restrict municipal provision of broadband. Local communities across North Carolina deserve access to high-speed broadband systems, which can play a central role in economic development, job growth, and the delivery of education and healthcare services.

EDUCAUSE is a non-profit association of over 2,200 colleges and universities. We represent the interests of the IT professionals on campus from chief information officers (CIOs) to the professionals who keep networks operating on a day-to-day basis. Over 30 of our members are North Carolina colleges and universities. While many of member institutions enjoy relatively robust access to broadband on-campus, over 80% of our students and virtually all of our faculty and staff live off-campus. Their participation in distance learning and off-campus research, as well as their ability to simply use applications otherwise available on campus, depends on off-campus networks that provide suitable broadband access.

When private broadband companies are not providing service to the communities where our students, faculty, and staff live and work, such communities should be empowered to ensure higher education access and a viable, economically strong future for their citizens. Particularly now, in these difficult economic times, it has become increasingly important for colleges and universities to provide telework and distance learning opportunities to those living off-campus. Municipal broadband providers often fill a critical need by making access to such services possible

The United States is rapidly losing ground to other countries in per capita broadband deployment, access to high-capacity networks, cost per unit of bandwidth, and growth of new broadband users. To remedy this, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) included \$4.7 billion in broadband stimulus grants and specifically lists local governments as eligible entities to apply for and receive these funds. **SB1004/HB1252 would prevent North Carolina communities from applying for any of these funds. Further, these bills would impose numerous and burdensome obligations on cities and towns that private broadband companies do not have to meet.**

North Carolina is currently ranked 11th among states in broadband adoption. The North Carolina General Assembly has a clear interest in preserving and advancing this position of leadership through increasing broadband access for its citizens, particularly in unserved and underserved areas.

We at EDUCAUSE respectfully ask you to support the many North Carolina communities who wish to provide their citizens with broadband access to ensure their future in the local, national and international economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Luker". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mark Luker, Vice President
EDUCAUSE