BCAP
BROADBAND COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

Testimony Before Senate Majority Policy Committee

The Role of Data Centers in Supporting Broadband Infrastructure and Innovation

Presented by Todd Eachus, President,
Broadband Communications Association of Pennsylvania

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Chairman Argall, Senator Brown and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on the critical role that data centers play in supporting the broadband ecosystem and advancing the digital infrastructure of the United States.

As most of you know, the Broadband Communications Association of Pennsylvania works to promote, strengthen, and protect the broadband and telecommunications industry by providing support and value for our member companies and their customers; communicating and advocating a wide range of public policy positions in the rulemaking and legislative processes; and showcasing the valuable contributions of our members and broadband service in their communities and across the Commonwealth.

With the emergence of data centers and AI within Pennsylvania, we in the broadband industry have a vital and significant role to play in ensuring that data center development is advanced in the best way possible – for the industry, for communities and for all involved.

As BCAP president, please allow me to submit this testimony in an effort to provide insights into how data centers — from centralized hyperscale facilities to localized edge nodes — are not only integral to the functioning of broadband networks, but also essential to future-ready connectivity, innovation, and economic competitiveness.

BCAP members have made substantial investments in data center infrastructure to support broadband delivery. Data centers are critical not only in providing advanced residential broadband services but for our members' managed IT business services including banking/financial services, healthcare, education, industrial, institutional, and retail.

BCAP members look at data centers as the nerve centers of the broadband economy.

Let us briefly highlight the positive impacts of data centers for broadband customers:

• Reduced Latency: Edge data centers bring applications like video conferencing, cloud computing, and AI services closer to users.

• Traffic Optimization: Content Delivery Networks (CDNs) co-located in data centers allow for more efficient bandwidth use and reduced backbone congestion.

• Cloud Integration: Businesses increasingly depend on broadband to access mission-critical services hosted in the cloud.

In areas with limited broadband connectivity, data centers can help with infrastructure. They include:

• Fiber Backhaul Demand: Data centers require significant fiber connectivity, prompting new investments in local and regional broadband infrastructure.
• Rural Gaps: In areas lacking data centers or last-mile fiber, users may not fully benefit from the cloud economy.
• Asymmetric Traffic Flows: With downstream traffic dominating, ISPs must update their legacy systems to maintain balance and speed.

All would be win-wins for residential and business broadband customers.

As far as public policy for this emerging industry, please consider the following:

• Streamlining permitting for fiber and data center interconnection.
• Promoting public-private partnerships for smaller providers to leverage regional data centers.

• Recognizing data centers as broadband enablers and integral to universal service goals.

The convergence of broadband and data center infrastructure is accelerating. From DOCSIS to 5G, AI to cloud computing, nearly every innovation in connectivity is underpinned by intelligent, distributed data centers.

As this Committee continues its important work in shaping public policy and the delicate balance with respect to economic development, we encourage you to see data centers not just as buildings full of servers—but as essential public infrastructure for the digital age.

Thank you for your time and I welcome your questions.