



39TH DISTRICT
STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 30014
LANSING, MI 48909-7514

MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PAULINE WENZDEL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

PHONE: (517) 373-1799
FAX: (517) 373-8361
PaulineWendzel@house.mi.gov
www.RepWendzel.com

March 9, 2023

Michigan High-Speed Internet Office
Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
Lansing, MI 48933

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing to voice my support of Berrien County's application for funding from the Realizing Opportunities with Broadband Infrastructure Networks (ROBIN) grant program to expand broadband service in Berrien County. This grant would enable broadband deployment to unserved and underserved homes and businesses in rural Berrien County. This will allow our residents and businesses to access the fastest and most reliable speeds available and provide numerous opportunities to these residents.

The digital divide is very real. Parents who had to drive their kids to a fast-food restaurant's parking lot so they could do homework know it all too well. Realtors, whose first question they receive is, "does the property have internet?" - know it. Economic developers who pitch our community as an attractive investment opportunity only to be rejected for urban areas also recognize the growing divide. To compete in the 21st century, our communities need access to the internet. Without it, rural areas face a downward spiral of population decline and reduced economic activity. This is a death spiral that we can't let happen.

The potential for progress is immense. With high-speed internet, students in rural school districts can access the same educational resources as their counterparts in urban areas, giving them the tools to compete in the global economy. Small businesses can reach customers and markets around the world, creating new jobs and fueling economic growth. And families in remote areas can access telemedicine services, improving their health and well-being.

I sincerely hope you approve this grant request so that the people of Berrien County will finally have access to this basic service.

Sincerely,

Pauline Wendzel
State Representative