



September 16, 2025

The Honorable Morgan Griffith
U.S. House of Representatives
2110 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Griffith:

On behalf of the American Public Power Association (APPA), I am writing to express opposition to H.R. 278, the BROADBAND Leadership Act.

APPA is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide. Public power utilities are in every state except Hawaii. They collectively serve over 55 million people in 49 states and five U.S. territories and account for 15 percent of all sales of electric energy (kilowatt-hours) to end-use consumers.

As drafted, H.R. 278 would expand federal control over public power utility infrastructure with serious safety implications and no guarantee that any “savings” would be passed onto customers. Public power utilities strongly support the goal of increasing broadband deployment. However, we do not believe that this legislation will accomplish that goal. Section 224 of the Communications Act explicitly exempts public power utilities (and rural electric cooperatives) from Federal Communications Commission (FCC) oversight of pole attachments given that oversight is already provided at the local level. Cable and telecommunications companies have long worked to convince the FCC and Congress that the municipal exemption from FCC oversight of pole attachment rates and regulations should be eliminated. With no evidence, they claim that local control over rates and regulations are major barriers to broadband deployment.

As community-owned, not-for-profit entities, public power utilities have no incentive to prevent their own customers from getting access to broadband services. The only reason we would deny a communications attacher’s access to poles is on safety grounds. APPA would be happy to connect you with public power utilities in Virginia to give you more information on how they handle pole attachment requests at your convenience.

Again, public power utilities strongly support broadband expansion, but we do not believe that this bill will accomplish that goal. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Desmarie M. Waterhouse". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Desmarie M. Waterhouse
Senior Vice President, Advocacy & Communications and General Counsel