



May 6th, 2021

The Honorable Mark Lawrence
Chair, Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
52 Wildbrook Lane
Eliot, ME 03903

The Honorable Seth Berry
Chair, Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
1245 River Road
Bowdoinham, ME 04008

RE: Providing Information for LD 1484 – “The Connectivity Infrastructure Act”

Dear Chairs Lawrence and Berry,

On behalf of CTIA, the trade association for the wireless communications industry, I write to provide information about the wireless industry in the context of LD 1484. CTIA and our members support the goals of LD 1484, that “All residents, businesses and institutions in the State be able to take full advantage of the economic, health, educational, and other opportunities available through connectivity services.” We would welcome the opportunity to participate in future work sessions on LD 1484 and to highlight the integral role that the wireless industry plays in providing enhanced mobile broadband service to Mainers.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a powerful reminder of the importance of connectivity. COVID-19 prompted sudden and significant changes in how we live, work, and educate our kids. It’s been just over one year since COVID-19 was declared a national emergency. America’s wireless networks rose to the occasion, handling an unprecedented surge in mobile voice and data traffic almost overnight. The pandemic has seen voice traffic increase from 20 to 40 percent on wireless networks (which account for nearly 80 percent of voice connections in the United States). COVID-19 also drove significant increases in wireless broadband demand, with mobile data traffic up nearly 20 percent.¹ Mobile hotspot use has soared, and application use has skyrocketed.

As recent events have shown, connectivity is paramount and the wireless industry fights every day for its consumers while also working to upgrade and enhance wireless networks. Since 2010, wireless companies have invested over \$282 billion nationwide to improve speeds, coverage, and quality. In

¹ See CTIA, *How Wireless Kept Americans Connected During COVID-19*, at 3–4 (June 23, 2020) (noting that voice traffic and texting increased 20-40 percent, and mobile data traffic rose nearly 20 percent during the pandemic), <https://api.ctia.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/How-Wireless-Kept-Americans-Connected-During-COVID-19-2.pdf> (COVID-19 Wireless Connectivity Study).



Maine, specifically, the wireless industry contributes over \$1 billion to the state's GDP annually.² This is noteworthy because almost half of all Maine households are wireless-only.³

As wireless providers continue the rollout of 5G in Maine, it is also important to bear in mind the enormous economic benefits localities will experience due to these deployments. The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) estimates that over the next decade, 5G deployments will contribute \$1.5 trillion to US GDP and create 4.5 million jobs. In Maine, BCG estimates nearly \$3 billion will be contributed to the state's GDP and over 8,500 jobs could be created in Maine in the next decade.⁴

LD 1484 establishes the Maine Connectivity Authority ("Authority) charged with overseeing both federal funds as they relate to broadband deployment as well as state funding for broadband. As this Authority evaluates how broadband funding should be allocated, CTIA encourages a technology-neutral approach and not choosing one broadband technology over another. Maine's topography and demography means that a "one size fits all" approach will not benefit all Mainers in its pursuit to provide robust broadband across the state.

In closing, the wireless industry welcomes the opportunity to participate in future work session on LD 1484 and help to achieve the bill's very laudable goal in providing broadband to all Mainers. We would be happy to collaborate and share our expertise in building, maintaining and upgrading first class wireless networks during this process.

Sincerely,

Bethanne Cooley
Assistant Vice President
State Legislative Affairs

² See: Wireless Impact in Maine, https://www.ctia.org/4g-assets/WirelessImpact_ME.pdf, last accessed 5/3/2021.

³ CDC/NCHS Wireless Substitution State-Level Report (2019)

⁴ "The 5G Economy Will Spur Massive GDP and Job Growth Across the US." *BCG Global*, Feb. 2 2021, www.bcg.com/press/2february2021-5g-economy-will-spur-massive-gdp-and-job-growth-across-the-us, last accessed 5/3/2021.