

COUNTY COMMISSION OF GRANT COUNTY

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April 18, 2025

The Honorable Patrick Morrissey
Governor of West Virginia
1900 Kanawha Blvd E
Charleston WV 25305

Dear Governor Morrissey;

We are writing to express our strong support for the deployment of Fiber to the Home (FTTH) infrastructure in Grant County, West Virginia, as the preferred broadband solution over satellite services such as Starlink. After careful consideration of the region's unique geography, socio-economic needs, and long-term development goals, it is evident that FTTH provides a more sustainable, equitable, and high-performance option for our community. Grant County was fortunate to be awarded projects from both the LEAD and MBPS programs and have Internet Service providers willing to continue their investment in our county. Starlink is currently available and if the residents of Grant County wanted Starlink they could purchase it at any time. Also, fiber is a more affordable solution for the Grant County residents, and with better technical support from our local Internet service providers. From our experience, you cannot talk to technical support when asking for help from Starlink. Why would we not want to support the local internet service providers expand their network when Starlink already exists for the residents already. Grant County is also very close to the National Radion Quiet Zone. We are concerned about the increase of Starlink satellites and what impact that could have on the quiet zone.

Key reasons why FTTH is a better solution than satellite-based internet (e.g., Starlink) include:

1. Starlink

This service is currently available for residents in the state of West Virginia. So, that infrastructure already exists and is not adding anything new for the residents. From our experience, you cannot talk to technical support when asking for help from Starlink.

2. Superior Reliability and Performance

FTTH offers consistent gigabit-speed connections with low latency, crucial for telehealth, remote learning, agriculture tech, and small businesses. Unlike Starlink, which is subject to weather disruptions, satellite congestion, and line-of-sight issues (especially in mountainous terrain like ours), fiber delivers dependable service regardless of environmental conditions.

3. Better Long-Term Investment

Fiber infrastructure is future-proof, with the capacity to scale for decades. Starlink, while innovative, is still in development and faces uncertain long-term viability, especially as competition for satellite bandwidth increases. Fiber builds community wealth through job creation during construction and by attracting businesses that require robust digital infrastructure. There is a lot of talk about having data centers in the state of West Virginia. Data Centers are going to want fiber connections to provide their services. So wouldn't we want to build out fiber to support those services instead of satellite-base internet. That is how we are going to attract data centers to the state of West Virginia.

4. More Equitable Access

Satellite internet often includes data caps, variable speeds, and higher costs—especially for low-income or underserved households. FTTH offers more predictable, affordable pricing models with symmetrical speeds, ensuring everyone from students to seniors can participate fully in the digital economy.

5. Local Economic Development

A strong fiber backbone strengthens the state ability to support local entrepreneurship, remote work, and education access, and is a major factor in attracting new employers. Fiber networks are usually operated or maintained by local or regional providers, keeping investment and support in the community.

6. Environmental and Operational Resilience

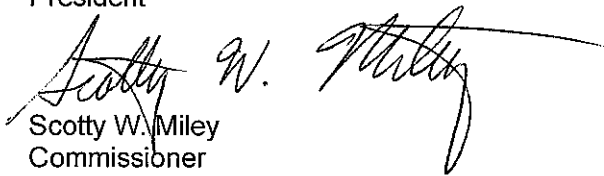
Grant County's topography—rural, mountainous, and heavily forested—makes satellite deployment logistically difficult for consistent residential service. Fiber can be buried underground or run along existing utility poles, providing better protection and stability during storms or winter outages.

In conclusion, Fiber to the Home is not just a connectivity solution—it is a critical infrastructure investment that will position Grant County for long-term growth, equity, and resilience. I respectfully urge decision-makers and funding bodies to prioritize FTTH deployments over temporary or second-tier alternatives like satellite service.

Sincerely,



Kevin P. Hagerty
President



Scotty W. Miley
Commissioner



Tyson K. Riggleman
Commissioner