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Testimony from:

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In SUPPORT of SB 66, "Streamlining Wireless Facilities and Antennas Act."

March 12, 2019

House Energy, Utilities & Telecommunications Committee

Chairman and members of the committee:

Thank you so much for this opportunity. We work for the R Street Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization. Our mission is to engage in policy research and outreach to promote free markets and limited, effective government in many areas, including technology and innovation, which is why SB 66 is of special interest to us.

We at the R Street Institute commend the Georgia General Assembly for considering the "Streamlining Wireless Facilities and Antennas Act." Given the quickly evolving broadband ecosystem and the development of new 5G technologies, examining local barriers to broadband deployment is both timely and appropriate.

Unlike the macro cells that characterized previous generations of wireless service, new 5G deployments will require the installation of numerous small wireless facilities, typically no larger than a backpack. With these deployments, wireless providers will be able to offer services 100 times faster than legacy 4G service and connect 100 times more devices to their networks. This unprecedented connectivity has the potential to transform communities, improve government services and stimulate growth throughout the economy.

However, while the technology has developed at a breakneck pace, local permitting processes have not. Around the country, cities continue treating small cells like traditional cell towers, imposing high fees and lengthy application reviews that make deployment slower or even infeasible for providers.

R Street has consistently worked toward lowering these barriers to broadband deployment, and in November, we released the 2018 Broadband Scorecard Report to examine each state's broadband



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deployment laws. Georgia did moderately well on the report with some good laws on the books, most notably shot clocks and cost-based fees on application reviews. However, in many areas the laws came up short, and there are still steps that the Georgia General Assembly can take to improve the broadband deployment process.

The “Streamlining Wireless Facilities and Antennas Act” does just that, building on the existing foundation to improve the deployment processes of next generation broadband services. First, the bill would branch into areas previously uncovered by existing law, such as allowing access to authority-owned poles and the batch processing of permit applications. Second, it improves existing laws by shortening existing shot clocks and lowering existing fee caps, allowing Georgians to get next-generation broadband faster and at lower costs.

These improvements will translate into more deployed infrastructure and better service for Georgia, and for these reasons, we respectfully ask that you give SB 66 serious consideration.

Thank you for your time,

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