



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo to PSC: Use Charter Communications settlement funds to expand internet access in 47th Senate District

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO July 16, 2019



ALBANY – Following a settlement between the Public Service Commission and Charter Communications, New York State Senate Deputy Minority Leader Joseph Griffo, R-I-C-Rome, sent a letter to PSC Chairman John B. Rhodes urging the commission to consider designating areas in his district for the expansion and building of internet and broadband access as part of the settlement between the two entities.

Per the agreement, Charter is to double its original commitment to invest \$305 million in the state. The agreement also will see Charter apportion an additional \$12 million to provide service to areas designated by the state. Deputy Minority Leader Griffo is seeking to use this additional \$12 million for investment in the underserved areas of the 47th Senate District.

“For many communities, businesses and residents across the state, access to fast, reliable and quality internet has become a necessity, especially at a time when we find ourselves more and more interconnected and dependent upon technology,” Deputy Minority Leader Griffo said. “However, not everyone has access to this important tool, which is used for educational, economic and social purposes. Using funding from the settlement between the Public Service Commission and Charter Communications would help to ensure that more residents and businesses in the 47th Senate District have internet access while also providing for increased economic development and additional educational opportunities for students and others.”

A copy of Deputy Minority Leader Griffo’s letter is below:

Chairman John B. Rhodes
New York State Public Service Commission
Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 3
Albany, NY 12223

Dear Chairman Rhodes:

In light of the Public Service Commission’s recent settlement with Charter Communications, I am writing to urge you to consider utilizing the \$12 million that Charter has agreed to allocate at the state’s behest to expand internet access in Oneida, Lewis and St. Lawrence

counties.

The 21st century economy dictates that our communities and businesses become more interconnected and dependent upon technology. Unfortunately, there are a number of residents within the 47th Senate District that do not have access to high-speed internet and other technologies offered through the use of broadband. This lack of access hinders communities throughout the Mohawk Valley and the North Country, and ultimately our state, from engaging in the economic benefits presented by the information age.

I have heard from a number of constituents in Oneida County, including residents of Waterville, Deerfield and Alder Creek, who have been without internet access for a number of years and have not had the issue resolved. Further, residents in Lyons Falls and other Lewis County communities as well as areas within St. Lawrence County do not have access to reliable, high-speed internet.

As the former chair of the state Senate's Energy and Telecommunications Committee, I understand the impact the lack of access to broadband services has on the lives of residents businesses. High-speed Internet is not only necessary for educational and personal purposes, but it also is critical to the long-term economic viability of Upstate New York because existing companies may be prevented from expanding and new businesses will establish elsewhere if they do not have an adequate and reliable broadband service to meet their needs.

If you have any questions on this issue, please do not hesitate to contact my office by calling 315-793-9072. Thank you very much for your interest in this important matter.

Sincerely,

Joseph A. Griffo

State Senate, 47th District