

**RE: RESOLUTION OF THE ERIE COUNTY LEGISLATURE TO ENCOURAGE VERIZON COMMUNICATIONS TO APPLY TO THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION FOR A FRANCHISE TO ALLOW THE INSTALLION OF FIOS THROUGHOUT ERIE COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, in today's society high-speed internet is essential to economic development and job creation; improvements in education, healthcare, public services, environmental protection and independent living for ill, disabled or those who have restricted mobility; and advances in e-government, public safety, and civic participation; and

**WHEREAS**, Erie County residents, small businesses and institutions have not been able to reap the benefits of competitive alternatives for high-speed internet access and video services because Verizon Communications has refused to apply to the Public Service Commission for a franchise that would allow it to build its high-speed all-fiber FiOS network in Erie County and the City of Buffalo, despite the fact that Verizon has built FiOS networks in five nearby suburban communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Verizon's refusal to deploy its FiOS network in the City of Buffalo as well as rural areas of Erie County to provide the capability needed for 21<sup>st</sup> century data-intensive and video-rich applications disproportionately disadvantages low-income and minority residents and businesses in the City and rural regions, deepening the educational gap and digital divide; and

**WHEREAS**, video prices continue to skyrocket in Erie County and across the nation, rising at four times the rate of inflation, according to the Federal Communications Commission's most recent Report on Cable Industry Prices and only communities with competitive wireline cable TV providers have not experienced significant price increases for TV; and

**WHEREAS**, consumers benefit from competitive choice; small businesses benefit from truly high-speed connections to suppliers and customers; schools and hospitals benefit from the jobs that come from building, maintaining and servicing these high-speed networks; and families and communities benefit from the 21<sup>st</sup> century jobs and expanded tax base from deployment of truly high-speed internet and video services; but Verizon's refusal to deploy FiOS in all of Erie County, has deprived its residents, businesses, and institutions of these benefits; and

**NOW, THERFORE BE IT,**

**RESOLVED**, that the Erie County Legislature urges County negotiators as soon as the permission from the Public Service Commission is received to conduct negotiations with Verizon Communications and to do so in a manner that facilitates Verizon Communications' deployment of its all-fiber FiOS network as rapidly as possible to all residents, businesses and institutions in the County, consistent with protection of the public interest; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the Erie County Legislature urges Verizon Communications to conduct its negotiations with County negotiators for a franchise agreement in a manner that is fair and equitable not only to Verizon but to the citizens of Erie County; and be it further

**RESOLVED**, that the Erie County Legislature is open to dialogue with Verizon Communications to discuss the concerns it has about the lack of FiOS network capability in Erie County and looks forward to working with Verizon Communications to best serve the residents and businesses of Erie County.

**Fiscal Impact**, these negotiations will be of no fiscal impact to the county.