Testimony of Kent Blickensderfer

Presented to Chairman Jason Dockter

Political Subdivision Taxation Committee

June 29, 2016

Chairman Dockter and committee members my name is Kent Blickensderfer. I am the Director of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs for CenturyLink in North and South Dakota. CenturyLink is the successor company to the former Qwest, US West and Northwestern Bell Telephone Companies. Century Link today has a worldwide network with local telecom operations in 37 US states.

CenturyLink wishes to express support for extending the telecommunications infrastructure sales tax exemption beyond the sunset date of June 30, 2017. This exemption has served the state well in past years through increased investment in technology that may have otherwise gone elsewhere but for this consideration by lawmakers from North Dakota. One can point to several recent advancements in technology deployed throughout the state by CenturyLink and other providers, giving North Dakotans access to one of the most robust networks available anywhere in the United States today. CenturyLink in North Dakota is like most companies operating here. Internally, we compete for capital for investment against our more populous neighboring states to keep up and expand broadband technologies. Often, an

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added incentive like a sales tax exemption on investment is just the extra push needed to make a decision to invest here rather than other areas lacking such incentives.

The benefits to citizens, businesses and government institutions throughout the state have been vast. Please consider extending this important incentive here to keep North Dakota competitive with more urban states and help telecom companies like CenturyLink and others continue to invest and expand the latest technologies now and into the future. Thank you for your consideration.