

HILLENBRAND

July 2, 2018

General Counsel Beth Heline
Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission
101 West Washington Street, Ste. 1500 E
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Re: IUSF-Broadband Study

Dear Ms. Heline:

Hillenbrand is a global diversified industrial company headquartered in Batesville, Indiana. We operate two business segments: Batesville and the Process Equipment Group. The company has grown substantially in the past ten years with a presence in now over 40 countries. Hillenbrand owns six companies, one of which is also headquartered in Indiana - Batesville Casket Company.

We deeply appreciate the opportunity to submit public comment to the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission on the study topics related to the Indiana Universal Service Fund and broadband deployment. More specifically, our concerns focus on broadband deployment with regards to improvement of access to broadband services and expansion of service regions.

One of our company's core values is continuous improvement, which we adhere to as we strive to enrich our rural community. With this in mind, we strongly believe that broadband access is a quality of life issue for our employees and community, and we support any efforts to provide funding mechanisms to improve access and affordable internet services.

As a public company in a rural community, we are competing in a global dynamic economy, and must ensure our employees and community have basic necessities for a high-quality life. Broadband services are vital to communities and should be held to the same standards as basic utilities. As we recruit employees, many have cited access to internet in our region as a key consideration for choosing to live in the neighboring states of Ohio or Northern Kentucky and commute to Batesville.

Our employees who elect to live in Batesville may decide to send their kids to the Batesville Community School Corporation, one of the leading schools in our state. The school offers 1:1 technology where homework and test prep is all done on their iPads. Without access to quality internet, families (who are able) are challenged to run to the library daily before it closes to do homework.

Our non-profit community also feels the challenge. Without having access to internet, large external companies will offer coverage at a premium price. Without having the expansion of our networks, there is no competition to drive price down, leaving some of our community members with no choice but to pay exorbitant amounts to get what is now considered a basic service.

This is a quality of life issue for our community. Would we offer a rural community a different standard of water sanitation? Would we offer a rural community candlelight instead of electricity?

HILLENBRAND

We are encouraged that the state is taking steps to remediate this issue and voice our support for further broadband deployment.

Sincerely,

Tory Flynn
Director, Communications & Public Affairs
Hillenbrand