Sen. Marklein: Broadband bill veto ignores needs in rural Wisconsin

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MADISON – Sen. Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) made the following statement in response to Governor Tony Evers' veto of Senate Bill (SB) 365 which would have improved the Rural Broadband Expansion Grant program and directed state funds to more rural communities that do not have service.

"Once again, I am extremely disappointed that Governor Tony Evers vetoed a bill for rural Wisconsin. This is just another example of the Governor's preference for urban cities over the rural people I serve.

The Governor vetoed my rural broadband bill that would have ensured that state funding for rural broadband expansion pays for projects that reach people who are not connected and do not have broadband service. My bill was another step toward dialing-in state investments in rural broadband expansion to specifically target communities that do not have any service or federal investments in broadband.

Instead, the Governor decided that he would rather be able to send these funds to places like the city of Milwaukee and other cities that already have multiple telecommunications providers and options for consumers. He also wants to be able to send these funds to communities that may have a federal project starting soon, rather than sending it to a community that has no options in sight.

My bill was supported by rural people, communities and the telecommunications providers who serve us in rural Wisconsin, as well as several of the large telecommunications providers who are working throughout the state.

Again, I am very disappointed that the Governor didn't listen to the people who are trying to connect our communities and expand broadband into rural areas of

Wisconsin. This issue is not going away and I will keep working until everyone who wants to be connected has the option."