

September 19, 2023

Governor Josh Shapiro
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: PA Telefile Elimination on December 31, 2023

Dear Governor Shapiro:

On behalf of the 420 members of the Columbia Montour Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to express concern over the planned elimination of the Commonwealth's tele-file tax filing service, effective December 31, 2023. In our rural community, which has not yet met the Administration's goal of "broadband for all" as expressed by the Pennsylvania Broadband Redevelopment Authority, entrepreneurs, home-based businesses, and farm operations which rely on tele-file as a mechanism to comply with PA's tax filing deadlines will experience new burdens with this program's early termination. Sadly, several attempts to secure alternative options from the Commonwealth of PA's tele-file service helpline have resulted in the following response from the administration, saying, that residents should, "Just go to the public library to file on the computer."

This short-sighted response does not consider the unnecessary burdens added to home-based tax-filers, including transportation several miles away, to facilities with limited hours which are not as secure as filing from one's home.

While we recognize the urgency for Pennsylvania's tax filing system to meet modern demands for security, speed of filing, and ease of use, we believe that the deadline is too soon, and strongly urge you to consider extending the tele-file deadline for rural communities such as those in Columbia and Montour Counties, to align with the Administration's goals related to the expansion of broadband, which we applaud. Until high-speed, broadband internet is accessible to rural PA residents, we urge you to reconsider eliminating a service that makes tax filing simpler than the alternative.

Thank you for your consideration of this short-term request to provide relief for communities who are as-yet unserved and underserved by broadband, high-speed internet, and who rely on tele-file.

Sincerely,



Christopher H. Berleth
President



Cc: Stacy Garrity, Treasurer
Senator Lynda Schlegel Culver
Representative Robert Leadbeter
Representative Michael A. Stender