



SMALL TOWN TECH

INC

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**Written Testimony of
Jim Yount and Ted Saxton
Small Town Tech, Inc.
Minnesota House File 1337
Submitted to the House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee
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Members of the committee, we are writing to you in support of HF 1337. As co-owners of a technology services and repair shop in northern Minnesota, we experience the challenges of maintaining and repairing modern technology for residential and small businesses customers on a daily basis. As our shop has evolved over the years, we had to make the strategic choice to stop providing repair service for cell phones due in large part to challenges which have, no doubt, been explored in significant detail in other testimony at this hearing – specialized parts and tools, design choices that unnecessarily inhibit repair, and more.

The challenges that inspired the Digital Fair Repair Act and drive its support are exacerbated in remote, rural Minnesota. Despite that decision several years ago, hardly a day goes by that we don't have one or several customers coming in for help with their cell phones or tablets. Unfortunately, there are no options on this side of the Canadian border within a two-hour radius. We would welcome anyone setting up an independent repair shop specializing in such devices, but they would, of course, face the same impediments. The challenges are exacerbated by the lower volume of such work in a small community, making it harder to justify the tools and supplies and slower to build up the specialized knowledge and experience to repair the wide range of such devices, which get harder to fix each year.

This situation places a significant economic burden on our population, raising the cost of ownership and thus effectively reducing the availability of such essential devices for our low-income residents. If they could repair their own devices or the costs of independent repair shops could be lowered, it would be a significant economic relief for many rural and low-income Minnesotans. The availability of affordable refurbished devices would also increase.

The same situation applies to computers as well - especially laptops and all-in-ones – which our shop does still repair. Too often, design features and the parts market make these devices unaffordable to repair or upgrade when they would otherwise be worth the investment. We see the resulting economic impact on our friends and neighbors every day.

We welcome this effort to make device repair more affordable and equitable for all.

Jim Yount & Ted Saxton
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