RESOLUTION SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET THROUGHOUT SUWANNEE COUNTY

WHEREAS, Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative's Smart Grid Project will connect its substations and downstream devices together via fiber optic cable to expand the self-healing capabilities of the cooperative's electric system; and

WHEREAS, the cable installed for the Smart Grid Project has the potential to form the "backbone" of a much wider fiber optic network capable of connecting all residents and businesses of Suwannee County to each other and the Internet; and

WHEREAS, Suwannee County, like many other rural areas in America, finds itself on the wrong side of the "digital divide," being under served or unserved by broadband providers; and

WHEREAS, access to reliable and affordable high-speed internet service that offers a capacity for transmission at a consistent speed of at least 25 megabits per second downstream and 3 megabits per second upstream is essential for fostering educational opportunities, access to healthcare, and an economy characterized by a robust workforce and business growth, and;

WHEREAS, the absence and/or lack of high-speed internet:

- hinders the ability for students of all ages to have access to invaluable educational resources and opportunities,
- hinders access to telemedicine, which can provide high-quality healthcare and treatment to Suwannee County residents without the exorbitant cost and hassle of transportation,
- hinders the ability for rapid and dependable communication between the public and law enforcement agencies,
- hinders the ability for communities to maintain and expand business opportunities and stimulate job growth,
- hinders the ability for residents and businesses to utilize innovative technologies that are required for a vibrant economy; and

WHEREAS, in 1937, residents and community leaders banded together to create Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative to bring reliable and affordable electricity to the homes, farms, and businesses in the Suwannee Valley when existing utilities would not; and

WHEREAS, in the same spirit, Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative once again endeavors to provide for a vital unmet need of the people of the Suwannee Valley;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Suwannee County School Board, that we support the efforts by Suwannee Valley Electric Cooperative, by way of its Smart Grid Project, to bring access to reliable and affordable high-speed internet to every household, farm, and business in Suwannee County.

Jerry Taylor, Board Chairman

Ted L. Roush, Superintendent of Schools

SEP 13 2022

Date

"Approved as to Form and Sufficiency
BY _____
Leonard J. Dietzen, III
Rumberger, Kirk & Caldwell, P.A.
Suwannee School Board Attorney"