

June 28, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Room H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

We urge Congress to provide full funding to universally build networks that will deliver capacity that will meet local needs for decades and to ensure rigorous scrutiny of recipients of federal dollars so that the program achieves the legislation's future-proof goals. It is time to act to end the digital divide forever by passing a national broadband infrastructure program that will deliver universal, affordable, 21st century ready access.

Eighty-five years ago, Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act to connect American homes with electricity. Through decisive government action, universal access to electricity was delivered. That decision changed the lives of Americans by giving them an opportunity to participate in the modern world. It also helped bind America together, bridging a distinct divide that existed in the country. Today, Congress can demonstrate the vision that its predecessors showed decades ago by connecting every American with the 21st Century equivalent of electricity – broadband.

All across the nation, gaps in accessible and affordable broadband connectivity due to a lack of infrastructure capable of meeting today's and tomorrow's communications needs have clearly been demonstrated. In fact, it is reported that 35% of rural Americans do not have access to broadband from any provider. Millions more, including low-income urban neighborhoods, may have rudimentary access but at speeds too slow, too unreliable, and too expensive to accommodate distance learning, telehealth, or working from home – now essential requirements in today's economy. As a result, community anchor institutions – such as libraries, rural health clinics, community centers and houses of worship – often have trouble obtaining the high-speed broadband they need to bring education, information and telemedicine to the residents of their communities.

21st century broadband, far above the 2015 FCC standard of 25/3 Mbps, is a necessity for all communities demanding modern services to help overcome the challenge of distance, attract new businesses, and provide young workers good paying jobs. Any new federal program must fund broadband infrastructure capable of enabling businesses to meet the needs of consumers,

empower businesses to relocate to any community, provide opportunities for teleworkers and students at the same level regardless of geography, enable anchor institutions to fully provide for their entire communities, and make possible precision agriculture capabilities for agriculture producers to improve efficiencies.

The United States met the challenge of electrifying America in the last century with an audacious plan we take for granted today. A similarly bold approach is needed to build universally available broadband infrastructure fully capable of supporting all communications technology needs and meet ever rising demand for bandwidth. A federal program by Congress that emphasizes delivering future-proof infrastructure can enable not just ubiquitous fiber wireline access, but also make possible ubiquitous wireless services that rely on fiber optics including 5G, next generation Wi-Fi, and their future iterations.

Sincerely,

American Library Association
American Sustainable Business Council
Communications Workers of America
Engine
Fiber Broadband Association
Electronic Frontier Foundation
Farm Credit Council
INCOMPAS
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives

National Digital Inclusion Alliance
National League of Cities
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)
NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association
Power and Communication Contractors Association
Rural America Strategies LLC
Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition

Access Humboldt
Access Now
ADS Advanced Data Services, Inc.
AgJunction
Agudath Israel of America Community Services
Akaku Maui County Community Media
Alaska State Library
Alliance for Community Media
Arkansas Research and Education Optical Network (AREON)
ASBURY PARK (NJ) PUBLIC LIBRARY
Ashbury Senior Computer Community Center
Asotin County Library
Association of Idaho Cities
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities
Association of Washington Cities
Baltimore City Office of Broadband and Digital Equity
Benchmark Communications LLC
Benton Institute for Broadband & Society
Bevin Bowersmith, PCs for People Ohio Director
Build Healthy Places Network
California Center for Rural Policy
California Emerging Technology Fund
California IT in Education
CENIC
Center for Accessible Technology
Center for Democracy & Technology

Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching
Center for Innovative Technology
Center for Rural Strategies
Central Coast Broadband Consortium
Channelford Associates
Chief Officers of State Library Agencies
Clever
Coalition of African Communities (AFRICOM)
CoBank
Community Tech Network
Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel
Connecting Appalachia Coalition
CoSN - the Consortium for School Networking
Cyberspan Digital Alliance
Denver Digital Equity Coalition
Denver Public Library
Digital Inclusion Practitioners of New Jersey (DIPNJ)
Digital Wish
DigitalC
Digitunity
Distributed Ledger Inc
Educational Professional Services
E-Rate & Educational Services, LLC
EveryLibrary Institute
Fight for the Future
Focus LLC
Free Geek

Fresno Unified School District
 Front Porch
 Gigabit Libraries Network
 Global Minnesota
 GWI (Great Works Internet)
 Harrison Edwards PR
 Hawai'i Community College
 Hawaii Foodbank
 HDT
 IBSA, Inc.
 IdeaTek Telcom, LLC
 InnovateEDU
 Internet Society
 Internet2
 Janice Meyers Educational Consulting, LLC
 Jeff Davis County Library
 JMF Solutions, Inc
 Kellogg & Sovereign Consulting
 Kovir LLC
 LA Tech4Good
 LEARN - Lonestar Education and Research Network
 Library of Virginia
 Link Oregon (Oregon Fiber Partnership)
 Lit Communities Broadband, Inc.
 Literacy Assistance Center
 Literacy Partners
 Literacy Source
 Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation
 Los Angeles County Office of Education
 Massachusetts Municipal Association
 MCNC
 Media Alliance
 MediaJustice
 Merit Network
 mohuman
 Monkeybrains
 National Association of Counties
 National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA)
 National Cooperative Business Association CLUSA International
 National Digital Equity Center
 National Hispanic Media Coalition
 NC League of Municipalities
 NC Telehealth Network Association
 NMIC
 NTEN
 NYACCE
 NYC Employment and Training Coalition
 NYSERNet, Inc.
 OCHIN & The California Telehealth Network
 Oklahoma Agricultural Cooperative Council, Inc.
 OpenMedia
 Pacific Northwest Gigapop
 PCs for People
 Petrichor Broadband, LLC
 Prairie STEM
 Public Knowledge
 Ridgefield Economic & Community Development Commission
 Right Here, Right Now Project
 Riverside Language Program, Inc.
 Rural Community Assistance Partnership
 Rush County Connect Broadband Taskforce - Rush County, Indiana
 San Francisco Tech Council
 San Jose Public Library
 Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB) Coalition
 Shreve Memorial Library
 SmartWAVE Technologies
 Sonic Telecom
 Sonoma County Library
 Southern Ohio Health Care Network
 Southern Oregon Education Service District
 Sports Fans Coalition
 State Educational Technology Directors Association (SETDA)
 State of Hawaii, Broadband & Digital Equity Office
 Stemmastics LLC
 Sun Corridor Network
 Sun Global Broadband LLC
 Tangent Systems Inc.
 Tel/Logic Inc. d.b.a. E-Rate Central
 Teltech Communications - Frisco, TX
 Texoma Communications, LLC
 The Kansas City Public Library
 The Kansas Research and Education Network (KanREN)
 The Quilt
 Tilson
 Ting Internet
 UNITE-LA
 Urban Libraries Council
 Utah Education and Telehealth Network
 Utilities Technology Council
 Valley Vision
 Velocity Fiber
 Visionary Broadband
 Voqal
 WANRack, LLC
 Washington Public Utility Districts Association
 Western Governors University
 Western New York Library Resources Council
 Wikimedia Foundation
 WinstonNet
 Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
 Writers Guild of America West
 WTA -- Advocates for Rural Broadband
 X-Lab