

For Immediate Release

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172 Organizations Call on Congress to Increase Broadband Speeds with Future Proof Fiber

Letter signed by leading consumer, local, rural, and education organizations, as well as competitive ISP's and trade groups representing wired, wireless builders

WASHINGTON DC (June 28, 2021) – As Congress takes steps toward a historic broadband infrastructure package, a [new letter](#) signed by 172 organizations is urging policy makers to make future proof fiber the foundation. Highlighting the need to help local communities address accessibility and affordability gaps, the letter underscores the need to build new networks that address the digital divide and meet the long-term needs of all Americans.

The 172 signers on the letter span the political spectrum and represent the nation's leading consumer and public interest advocates, farming, education, libraries, health, and local advocates for cities large and small. Signers also include competitive ISP's and trade groups that represent both wired and wireless providers.

A copy of the letter and a full list of signers can be found [here](#) and below:

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

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

Power and Communication Contractors Association
Rural America Strategies LLC
Schools, Health & Libraries Broadband (SHLB)
Coalition

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
Stemnastics 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