

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, 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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