

## COMMUNITY BROADBAND COALITION

September 21, 2007

Dear Senator:

We write to urge you to cosponsor S. 1853, the bipartisan Community Broadband Act of 2007, introduced by Senators Frank Lautenberg, Gordon H. Smith, John Kerry, John McCain, Claire McCaskill, Olympia J. Snowe, Ted Stevens, and Daniel K. Inouye.

Community broadband networks offer the promise of increased economic development and jobs, enhanced market competition, improved delivery of e-government services, and accelerated universal, affordable Internet access for all Americans. Moreover, these networks will help promote our homeland security.

In just the past few years, our nation has lost its broadband leadership position. Having been 1<sup>st</sup> in the world in the 1990s, the United States has fallen to 15<sup>th</sup> among industrialized nations in broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants. The United States is also falling behind the leading nations in access to high-capacity networks, cost per unit of bandwidth, and growth of new users. Many countries that are outpacing us in broadband deployment, including Canada, Japan, and South Korea, have successfully combined municipal systems with privately deployed networks to bring high-speed broadband to their citizens. The United States can match or even exceed their successes, but only if community leaders can develop networks that make sense for their communities, including public-private partnerships and systems wholly owned by municipalities.

At the turn of the last century, when the private sector failed to provide electric service to much of America, thousands of community leaders stepped forward to form their own electric utilities. Now, communities across America are ready to provide broadband access to their citizens, offering competitive alternatives for their consideration.

Communities across America are ready and eager to bring the economic and social benefits of broadband access to their citizens. Today, hundreds of cities have launched community broadband initiatives, either with private partners or on their own, and many more are now in the planning stages. Communities should be encouraged to step forward to do their part to ensure the rapid deployment of broadband to all Americans, and they should have the freedom to choose what makes the most sense for their citizens.

The undersigned trade associations, public interest organizations, local government organizations, and private companies share a common commitment to enhancing the availability of broadband services throughout the country. We thus urge you to cosponsor the Community Broadband Act of 2007.

Thank you for your consideration.

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