

COMMUNITY BROADBAND COALITION

April 7, 2006

Dear _____:

We urge you to support HB 245 and SB 495, which would repeal the 2004 Local Government Fair Competition Act.

Louisiana has a unique opportunity to show America and the rest of the world how local communities can help build the advanced communications infrastructures necessary to compete in today's global economies. Municipal 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. In the wake of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Wilma, new technologies demonstrated the resiliency and reliability of communications systems that can be used by police, fire, and EMS departments every day. In the future, these locally deployed technologies can help first responders, volunteers, and local governments react quickly to disasters, particularly when old ways of communicating no longer work.

Nothing better illustrates how these public-private partnerships can serve America than the decision by the City of New Orleans to construct a wireless mesh network "cloud" available to the public. This network is bringing back businesses, residents, students, and tourists. It will improve public safety and access to needed public services and information. And perhaps most importantly, it shows the world the "can do" spirit of America. Hurricane Katrina may have washed away the old copper lines and coax cables, but the City of New Orleans is now embarked on an effort to rebuild itself stronger than before.

The undersigned trade associations, public interest organizations, local government organizations, and private companies share a common commitment to enhancing the availability of broadband services. We therefore urge you to support HB 245 and SB 495 because they would give local government leaders the flexibility to deploy or to continue to operate municipal broadband networks for the benefit of their citizens by promoting economic development and by enhancing public safety.

Thank you for your consideration.

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