

United States Senate
Washington, DC, 20510

February XX, 2007

Dear Senator,

We are writing to urge you to support immediate adoption of a national broadband policy that will lead to universal, affordable access for all Americans to high-speed Internet connections.

The Senate, the White House and leaders in the private and non-profit sector have long supported this goal. Yet in the last few years, the US has slipped well behind the world leaders in the performance and penetration of our broadband networks. America has seen nearly a decade of decline in its world standing in broadband services largely because of an uncompetitive marketplace -- with monopolies and barriers to entry written into the law. In part, this is because we lack a comprehensive policy to address the digital divide, ensure the free flow of content, and promote the development of ubiquitous, high-speed Internet access at affordable prices.

Now is the time to give this goal the urgency it deserves. A national broadband policy will provide the unifying principle to enact a variety of needed reforms and changes to our telecommunications laws. As broadband networks become more and more integral to our economic and social life, we are reaching a tipping point where legislation is no longer simply welcome—it is imperative.

Taking concrete steps in this decade to increase access to the Internet is vital to economic growth, educational development, and social opportunity – much like rural electrification in the 1930's and our Interstate Highway system in the 1950's. The 21st century information superhighway marries the power of free speech and free markets—producing the greatest engine of democratic deliberation and open commerce since the printing press. With the concerted will of this Congress, backed by the support of the American people, we believe that a national broadband policy will deliver on the full promise of what information technologies have to offer.

To demonstrate our commitment, our coalition has come together in support of principles which we hope will guide your deliberations as we move toward a national broadband policy.

Universal Affordable Access

Broadband Internet access should be universally available and affordable. Rural or urban, rich or poor, every American must be able to access the information superhighway at fair prices and speeds that rival the rest of the world. Like world-class schools and the best research science, the information superhighway must be considered an indispensable part of our society that has the potential to provide economic and social opportunities to all. Universal service programs focused on broadband are a key starting point for this goal.

An Open Internet

Access to broadband networks should be open to all producers and consumers of Internet content on fair and equal terms. The Internet should offer a free market to all competitors and maximum choice to all consumers. All lawful Web sites, devices, applications and services should have unfettered access to open Internet networks. This principle, known as network neutrality, ensures that no self-interested gatekeepers can hold captive the online economic marketplace or marketplace of ideas.

Quality through Competition

A competitive marketplace creates jobs, helps the American consumer, fosters innovation, and drives economic growth. America must build the world's most advanced communications networks, maximize competition on those networks, and ensure that all networks interconnect and interoperate. Regulation should be restrained, technology neutral and consistent across all competitive networks.

We thank you for reviewing these principles, and we look forward to working with the 110th Congress to achieve these vital goals.

Sincerely,