

August 10, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer, Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for Rural Broadband Development

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McConnell, McCarthy and Schumer:

On behalf of the Technology Councils of North America (TECNA), we strongly encourage Congress to act swiftly in passing two important pieces of legislation that will help connect families in underserved areas to high-speed broadband internet.

TECNA member associations are active in 35 states and serve over 20,000 tech firms with hundreds of thousands of employees across the U.S. Our technology councils' members are critical drivers of job creation and economic growth in states and regions throughout the U.S. Our members are the force behind supporting high growth companies, entrepreneurs, and startups, including through access to capital and establishing hubs for innovation.

The **Expanding Opportunities for Broadband Development Act** ([H.R. 7160](#)), was introduced by Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.); and the bipartisan **Rural Broadband Acceleration Act** ([H.R. 7022](#)) was introduced by U.S. House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC) and Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) along with 17 original House co-sponsors, and Senators Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Mike Braun (R-IN), and Doug Jones (D-AL). Both bills will take critical steps to speed rural deployment of broadband.

While 95% of American homes have access to broadband internet, only 79% of rural communities have access, mainly because of the costs of building infrastructure in sparsely populated communities. For those communities without a high-speed connection, the pandemic has underscored the crisis nature of the connectivity challenge. This is why the two bills are so important.

H.R. 7160 would expedite broadband deployment by cutting burdensome and outdated regulations. While well intended two decades ago in the days of dial-up modems, these regulations now invite abuse, slow deployment and discourage competition.

H.R. 7160 will open the doors for a range of experienced broadband providers to compete against one another for federal funds expand rural deployment and thereby help get us the most cost-effective solutions. This smart, common-sense reform will help bridge the rural divide – a prerequisite for economic opportunity and civic participation in the 21st Century.

H.R. 7022 would accelerate the deployment of gigabit tier networks in the upcoming \$20.4 billion Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) for builders starting construction within six months of receiving funding. And it sets a bold goal of providing broadband service to target communities within a year. This could quickly move a number of shovel ready projects into full production. This bill recognizes the urgency of closing broadband deployment gaps: the stakes are too high to wait any longer.

We have had the opportunity to see first-hand the challenges of unconnected communities during the pandemic. Rural communities have struggled with access to quality education and the recruitment of high-tech businesses as a result.

The public and private sectors must work together to help address the critical needs of broadband coverage in rural America. We urge immediate action on these two bills to ensure that everyone in this country, no matter where they live, has the same access to high-speed internet.

Thank you in advance for supporting this urgent request. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at ryan@kctechcouncil.com.

Sincerely,

Ryan Weber
Chair, TECNA Board of Directors

Signatories

Alabama

Tech Birmingham

Arizona

Arizona Technology Council (AZTC)

California

California Technology Council (CTC)

Tech San Diego

Colorado

Colorado Technology Association (CTA)

Connecticut

Connecticut Technology Council (CTC)

Florida

Florida Technology Council

Palm Beach Tech Association

Tamp Bay Tech

TechLauderdale

Georgia

Technology Association of Georgia (TAG)

Computer Measurement Group (CMG)

Idaho

Idaho Tech Council (ITC)

Illinois

Illinois Technology Association (ITA)
1871

Indiana

Indiana Technology & Innovation
Association
TechPoint

Iowa

Technology Association of Iowa (TAI)

Kansas

FlagshipKansas.Tech
KC Tech Council

Kentucky

Technology Association of Louisville
Kentucky (TALK)

Missouri

KC Tech Council

Massachusetts

Massachusetts Technology Leadership
Council (MassTLC)

Maryland

Maryland Tech Council (MTC)

Minnesota

MnTech

Montana

Montana High-Tech Business Alliance

New Hampshire

NH Tech Alliance

New Jersey

New Jersey Tech Council (NJTC)

New York

Tech Rochester

Nevada

Nevada Technology Association

New Mexico

New Mexico Technology Council (NMTC)

North Carolina

North Carolina Technology Association (NC
TECH)

North Dakota

Technology Council of North Dakota

Ohio

GCP Tech
Ohio IT Association

Oregon

Technology Association of Oregon (TAO)

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia Alliance for Capital and
Technologies (PACT)
Pittsburgh Technology Council
Tech Council of Central Pennsylvania

Rhode Island

Tech Collective

South Carolina

Tech Association of South Carolina

Tennessee

Chattanooga Technology Council
Greater Nashville Technology Council
Knoxville Technology Council

Texas

Tech Titans

Utah

Utah Technology Council

Virginia

Northern Virginia Technology Council
Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council

Washington

Washington Technology Industry
Association (WTIA)

Wisconsin

Wisconsin Technology Council

