



## National Lieutenant Governors Association

August 14, 2009

Honorable Jay Rockefeller, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-6125

Honorable Henry A. Waxman, Chairman  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Patrick J. Leahy, Chairman  
Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable John Conyers, Jr., Chairman  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rockefeller, Waxman, Leahy, and Conyers:

The undersigned organizations, representing the interests of state and local governments, write to express our members' view that Congress and the Federal Communications Commission should adopt a national broadband policy that focuses on promoting *adoption and use* of broadband technologies by all Americans regardless of race, income, or age.

For many months and with the advantage of a "bird's-eye-view" at the state and local level, each of our organizations has enacted adoption and use policy priority statements around the importance of broadband to the American economy and society. The facts are very clear: Over 90% of U.S. households are able to access at least one wireline broadband service, and 98% of Americans live in a zip code served by two or more providers<sup>1</sup>. High speed mobile wireless options now also blanket the nation, providing a viable alternative for many consumers.

What is also clear, however, is that while broadband adoption is clearly on the rise, only 63% of households now have broadband in the home. For certain demographic groups, the adoption rate is well below 50%. These low adoption rates continue a slow rate of increase even though monthly service prices are comparable to what many people spend for other monthly services. This indicates that there are other barriers that need to be addressed.

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<sup>1</sup> Congress and the FCC have noted the limitations of using zip code data to assess availability, a concern we share. However, the FCC data are not only the best national figures currently available but a fair indicator that the number of households that lack a physical connection to broadband is a small percentage of the total.

Therefore, we applaud Congress' commitment to provide at least \$250 million for programs that educate and train non-adopters on the benefits of broadband. We ask your respective committees to work with the Federal Communications Commission to develop a national broadband strategy which will give every American household the ability and incentive to adopt broadband, and take advantage of the opportunities it will bring. We urge that these programs have a particular emphasis on low-income, disadvantaged and other households among whom adoption is lowest.

Broadband adoption and use is a required, priority element of a national broadband strategy. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



Julia Hurst  
Executive Director  
National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA)



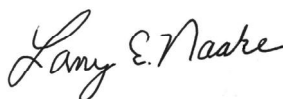
Calvin Smyre  
Georgia House of Representatives  
President, National Black Caucus of State  
Legislators (NBCSL)



Representative Joe Miró, Delaware  
President, National Hispanic Caucus of  
State Legislators (NHCSL)



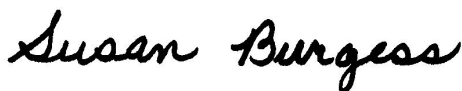
Representative Bill Hamzy, Connecticut  
American Legislative Exchange Council's  
Telecommunications and Information  
Technology Task Force Chair (ALEC)



Larry E. Naake  
Executive Director,  
National Association of Counties (NACo)



Representative David Casas, Georgia  
Chairman, National Conference of Hispanic  
Legislators (NCHL)



Susan Burgess  
Mayor Pro Tem, Charlotte, NC  
President, Women in Municipal Government (WIMG)



Daisy W. Lynum  
Orlando City Commissioner, District 5  
President, National Black Caucus of Local  
Elected Officials (NBC-LEO)



## National Lieutenant Governors Association

### Robert Steele

Robert Steele  
President, National Association of Black  
County Officials (NABCO)

cc: Hon. Kay Bailey Hutchison, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and  
Transportation  
Hon. Joe Barton, Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
Hon. Jeff Sessions, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary  
Hon. Lamar Smith, Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary