



Broadband Priorities

There are households and communities in the U.S. today that lack access to adequate broadband service, and a majority are located in rural America. We can all agree that this is unacceptable. In the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) 2018 Broadband Deployment Report, the FCC states that "the report finds that too many Americans lack access to high-speed Internet service, and the FCC must continue its work to encourage deployment of broadband to all Americans, including those in rural areas, on Tribal lands, and in the nation's schools and libraries." According to the Report, the broadband access gap in rural America remains notable: 30.7 percent of Americans in rural areas lack access to fixed terrestrial 25 Mbps/3 Mbps broadband, as compared to only 2.1 percent of Americans in urban areas. Any infrastructure package, or legislation that is part of an infrastructure package, that moves through Congress should address this critical shortfall in our nation's infrastructure.

Broadband Deployment Legislation

NATaT supports initiatives that will ensure equitable access to high speed and expandable / scalable broadband service to areas that still lack access to this crucial resource.

NATaT supports a number of bills currently before Congress that would accelerate broadband deployment across the country. NATaT is especially interested in measures that focus on getting broadband service to unserved and underserved areas. School-age children in rural communities are at a disadvantage and these rural communities with limited access to broadband are being left behind. All levels of government – local, state, and the federal government – must work together with the broadband providers to close the growing digital divide.

Federal Preemption

NATaT opposes Congressional or Administrative efforts to preempt local authority while deploying broadband and telecommunications services.

NATaT strongly supports broadband deployment but wants to ensure that local governments retain local control over siting decisions, fees and the time it takes to review applications. These are tenets of a community's right to self-govern and should not be preempted by the federal government. NATaT's top priority in the deployment of broadband services is public safety. We are concerned that the actions of few local governments who may charge high fees or take an unreasonable amount of time approving permits will impact all local governments. It is imperative that local governments take the time necessary to ensure public safety and charge the fees necessary to cover their costs related to the review process. In sum, we do not support any efforts to bypass local decision-making authority and strongly believe that such permitting and fee-related decisions lie squarely under the jurisdiction of local governments.

Broadband Caucuses

NATaT strongly supports the efforts of the Rural Broadband Congressional Caucuses in both the House and Senate to facilitate discussion, educate Members of Congress, and develop policy solutions to close the digital divide in rural America.

House Rural Broadband Caucus

[Bold italics = NATaT member states]

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[Bold italics = NATaT member states]

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