

Rep. Leonard Lance  
Opening Statement  
Broadband: Deploying America's 21st Century Infrastructure

Thank you, Chairman Blackburn, and thank you to our distinguished panel members for appearing before us today.

Since 1996, the wireless and wireline industries have invested over \$1.6 trillion in private capital investment. As we consider how best to promote broadband deployment and next generation networks it is important that we remember the successes of private investment in the past and pursue federal policies to help and encourage an emphasis on more private investment in the future.

As our economy becomes increasingly more digitized, bringing broadband access to more areas of the country connects more consumers and small businesses to the internet economy for the economic benefit of all. However, in many rural areas of the country, the cost to deploy broadband infrastructure is prohibitive and I believe that there is a role for federal funding to play in the cases where prohibitive costs prevent a market solution.

However, it is important that we recognize that any federal funds for broadband deployment will be finite and are focused on unserved areas of the country. The federal government should not be in the business of subsidizing competitors in local markets where a broadband provider already provides service and I am pleased that we are considering my resolution that clearly states this principle.

I am also pleased we are considering the ACCESS BROADBAND Act, which I introduced with Congressman Tonko. The bill would streamline the federal grant programs related to broadband deployment and better track how federal funds are used. I thank Congressman Tonko for his leadership on this important issue.

I commend Chairman Blackburn and the members of the subcommittee on both sides of the aisle on the impressive package of broadband infrastructure bills we are considering today. I look forward to hearing the testimonies from the panel.