

February 12, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone:

The Fiber Broadband Association commends the Subcommittee on Communications and Technology for the upcoming hearing to examine the progress made to close the digital divide and what remains undone to bring fast, reliable, internet service to all Americans regardless of geography or income level. The Fiber Broadband Association represents more than 250 members, including telecommunications, computing, networking, system integration, engineering, and content-provider companies, as well as traditional service providers, utilities, and municipalities. FBA's mission is to accelerate deployment of all-fiber access networks by demonstrating how fiber-enabled applications and solutions create value for service providers and their customers, promote economic development and enhance quality of life.

As the Subcommittee considers next steps to address the digital divide and connect all Americans with high-speed broadband, FBA urges you to keep the following priorities in mind:

- 1) Accelerated deployment of fiber broadband infrastructure is essential to close the digital divide and build resilience against existential threats such as pandemics. Fiber broadband is a superior technology that provides much greater bandwidth and speeds for more robust video, internet, and voice services. Once fiber is deployed in a community, it not only connects homes, schools, businesses, and anchor institutions to the internet, but also provides necessary critical infrastructure for 5G, towers, wireless networks, the Internet of Things, and smart city applications.
- 2) 5G depends on fiber networks to deliver fast speeds and expanded services. Areas without fiber infrastructure will not have access to 5G and will fall on the wrong side of the digital divide.
- 3) Meeting today's connectivity demands requires investment in sustainable networks. Sustainable networks are those that can meet not only the demands of users today but into the future. As the pandemic has required more people to go online for education, working, and health care, broadband use has become more symmetrical speeds. Today's pandemic uses, such as video conferencing, require networks that provide better upload speeds.

FBA applauds the Subcommittee's leadership in closing the digital divide and asks for your continued support for fiber broadband infrastructure. We stand ready to work with you on policies that support the continued rollout of fiber broadband networks. Please reach out to us anytime.

Sincerely,



Gary Bolton
President & CEO
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