



May 22, 2019

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone,

I am writing on behalf of the Satellite Industry Association (SIA) about the subject of today's hearing, the Leading Infrastructure for Tomorrow's (LIFT) America Act (H.R.2741). SIA applauds you for introducing this legislation and proposing additional resources to facilitate new and further broadband availability throughout the United States. As this bill is considered, we encourage you to further ensure that a technology-neutral approach will be taken to allocate any new funding to increase broadband availability.

Satellite broadband services are available directly to American households today, covering all 50 states and delivering download speeds up to 100 megabits per second to approximately two million subscribers. These broadband services are available even in rural and remote areas of the country where it remains uneconomical for terrestrial services to deploy, and they provide both speeds and prices comparable to terrestrial alternatives.

The satellite industry is investing tens of billions of dollars to innovate and increase broadband connectivity in the United States and across the globe. Terabit-capacity geostationary satellites will provide orders of magnitude capacity increases and resulting consumer broadband benefits, remaining competitive with terrestrial offerings. In addition, thousands of new high-throughput (non-geostationary) satellites will soon join existing operators in Low-Earth and Medium-Earth orbits to provide even more high-speed broadband at low latency levels.

SIA supports the Lift America Act's inclusion of a national reverse auction mechanism to distribute funding for broadband projects. SIA also supports the bill's requirement that the FCC and states "may not favor a project using any particular technology". Technology-neutral reverse auctions will ensure that limited public funds are distributed competitively and efficiently. The challenge of closing America's digital divide is widespread, persistent, and complex. Public policymakers should therefore not limit any technologies that could provide broadband to more American households.

Unfortunately, one provision in the introduced bill could limit the competition and efficiency of both the reverse auctions and the technology neutrality requirement. As introduced, the LIFT America Act would limit funding only to those projects that “offer broadband with a download speed of at least 100 megabits per second, an upload speed of at least 20 megabits per second, and a latency that is sufficiently low to allow real-time, interactive applications.” Rather than legislate a particular speed, SIA suggests it is more appropriate to leave performance standards to the Federal Communications Commission.

The satellite industry appreciates your continued efforts to extend the availability of broadband to all Americans, and SIA looks forward to further reviewing your legislation and offering suggested revisions to both address outstanding concerns and achieve the results you seek. Commercial satellite operators, with billions of private dollars already invested and ubiquitous broadband service coverage already available, will strongly support legislation that leverages all broadband-capable technologies to connect the most Americans in the shortest time and at the lowest cost.

Sincerely,

s/ Tom Stroup