

**Statement for the Record of Representative Anna G. Eshoo**

House Committee on Energy and Commerce

Full Committee Hearing on H.R. 2741, the *LIFT America Act*

2123 Rayburn House Office Building

May 22, 2019

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for holding today's hearing on the *Leading Infrastructure for Tomorrow's America Act* or *LIFT America Act*. I'm proud to be a cosponsor of this important legislation which makes critical investments in broadband deployment, clean energy, and health care infrastructure.

Ensuring that all Americans have access to quality and affordable internet service must be a top priority for our country. Despite gains made, over 21 million Americans still lack access to broadband. Every community in every part of our country, whether it's rural, suburban or urban, must have access to high-quality internet for modern healthcare, education, and jobs.

Congress can close the digital divide by making federal investments in the deployment of broadband and aligning incentives for investments by government and industry. The *LIFT America Act* takes critical steps to ensure that sufficient public investment can be directed toward broadband infrastructure, and I strongly support the provisions of this bill that authorize the amount of spending needed to close this divide that diminishes our country.

We still need to do more to incentivize investments in broadband by municipalities, states, federal agencies, and private entities. To that end, I've introduced four bills that create or improve incentives for equitable broadband investment. H.R. 2692, the *Broadband Conduit Act*, commonly known as 'dig once,' is bicameral, bipartisan legislation that mandates the inclusion of conduit—plastic pipes which house fiber optic cables—during road construction receiving federal funding. H.R. 2785, the *Community Broadband Act* is bicameral legislation that removes roadblocks for public-private partnerships and locally owned broadband systems. H.R. 2784, the *Clearing Local Impediments Makes Broadband Open to New Competition and Enhancements (CLIMB ONCE) Act* helps local communities streamline the pole attachment process to make the deployment of broadband faster, cheaper, and more competitive. H.R. 530, the *Accelerating Broadband Development by Empowering Local Communities Act of 2019*, repeals FCC regulations that unfairly limit the ability of local governments to regulate 5G infrastructure. The Committee should consider including these priorities in the *LIFT America Act*.

I'm also pleased the *LIFT America Act* includes bipartisan legislation I introduced, H.R. 2760, the *Next Generation 9-1-1 Act of 2019*, which authorizes \$12 billion in federal grant funding for state and local governments to deploy IP-based Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 911) technology across the country. The upgrades are urgently needed to help move the country's legacy 9-1-1 call centers into the digital age, enabling them to handle text messages, pictures, videos, and other information sent by smartphones, tablets, and other devices when faced with an emergency. The legislation also provides technical assistance and training, while ensuring 9-1-1 is kept under state and local control.

The *LIFT America Act* also makes key investments in the development and deployment of clean energy technology, by investing in programs to modernize our electricity grid, retrofit homes and schools to reduce carbon emissions, reduce emissions from aging diesel vehicles, expand our renewable energy infrastructure, and install solar panels in disadvantaged communities.

The *LIFT America Act* also reauthorizes the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program which provides grants to state and local governments to help them reduce fossil fuel emissions and conserve energy. This program is the largest federal investment in clean energy at the local level, and I'm pleased to be a cosponsor of the standalone bill H.R. 2088 which is identical to this provision of the *LIFT America Act*.

Finally, the health care provisions of the *LIFT America Act* make important investments in our nation's public health infrastructure. State, Tribal and local public health departments are on the front lines of prevention and response activities that keep Americans safe and healthy. Much of our public health infrastructure, including labs that monitor and detect outbreaks and the hospitals that respond in public health emergencies, are underprepared to respond to today's emerging public health threats. The *LIFT America Act* builds on existing grant programs and creates new programs to fund the development and modernization of our nation's labs, hospitals, clinics and public health departments.

The word "infrastructure" for many means roads and bridges, but our infrastructure needs to go beyond transportation to include energy, broadband, health care, clean water, and other infrastructure needs. The *LIFT America Act* makes critical investments to repair our aging infrastructure and address the challenges facing our nation of closing the digital divide, addressing the climate crisis, and improving public health.