



August 10, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
1236 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
2468 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer, Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

## **RE: Support for Rural Broadband Development**

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McConnell, McCarthy and Schumer:

On behalf of the Technology Councils of North America (TECNA), we strongly encourage Congress to act swiftly in passing two important pieces of legislation that will help connect families in underserved areas to high-speed broadband internet.

TECNA member associations are active in 35 states and serve over 20,000 tech firms with hundreds of thousands of employees across the U.S. Our technology councils' members are critical drivers of job creation and economic growth in states and regions throughout the U.S. Our members are the force behind supporting high growth companies, entrepreneurs, and startups, including through access to capital and establishing hubs for innovation.

The **Expanding Opportunities for Broadband Development Act** ([H.R. 7160](#)), was introduced by Rep. G.K. Butterfield (D-N.C.); and the bipartisan **Rural Broadband Acceleration Act** ([H.R. 7022](#)) was introduced by U.S. House Majority Whip James Clyburn (D-SC) and Rep. Fred Upton (R-Mich.) along with 17 original House co-sponsors, and Senators Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Michael Bennet (D-CO), Mike Braun (R-IN), and Doug Jones (D-AL). Both bills will take critical steps to speed rural deployment of broadband.

While 95% of American homes have access to broadband internet, only 79% of rural communities have access, mainly because of the costs of building infrastructure in sparsely populated communities. For those communities without a high-speed connection, the pandemic has underscored the crisis nature of the connectivity challenge. This is why the two bills are so important.

H.R. 7160 would expedite broadband deployment by cutting burdensome and outdated regulations. While well intended two decades ago in the days of dial-up modems, these regulations now invite abuse, slow deployment and discourage competition.

H.R. 7160 will open the doors for a range of experienced broadband providers to compete against one another for federal funds expand rural deployment and thereby help get us the most cost-effective solutions. This smart, common-sense reform will help bridge the rural divide – a prerequisite for economic opportunity and civic participation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

H.R. 7022 would accelerate the deployment of gigabit tier networks in the upcoming \$20.4 billion Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) for builders starting construction within six months of receiving funding. And it sets a bold goal of providing broadband service to target communities within a year. This could quickly move a number of shovel ready projects into full production. This bill recognizes the urgency of closing broadband deployment gaps: the stakes are too high to wait any longer.

We have had the opportunity to see first-hand the challenges of unconnected communities during the pandemic. Rural communities have struggled with access to quality education and the recruitment of high-tech businesses as a result.

The public and private sectors must work together to help address the critical needs of broadband coverage in rural America. We urge immediate action on these two bills to ensure that everyone in this country, no matter where they live, has the same access to high-speed internet.

Thank you in advance for supporting this urgent request. Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [ryan@kctechcouncil.com](mailto:ryan@kctechcouncil.com).

Sincerely,

Ryan Weber  
Chair, TECNA Board of Directors

### Signatories

**Alabama**

Tech Birmingham

**Arizona**

Arizona Technology Council (AZTC)

**California**

California Technology Council (CTC)

Tech San Diego

**Colorado**

Colorado Technology Association (CTA)

**Connecticut**

Connecticut Technology Council (CTC)

**Florida**

Florida Technology Council

Palm Beach Tech Association

Tamp Bay Tech

TechLauderdale

**Georgia**

Technology Association of Georgia (TAG)

Computer Measurement Group (CMG)

**Idaho**

Idaho Tech Council (ITC)

**Illinois**

Illinois Technology Association (ITA)  
1871

**Indiana**

Indiana Technology & Innovation  
Association  
TechPoint

**Iowa**

Technology Association of Iowa (TAI)

**Kansas**

FlagshipKansas.Tech  
KC Tech Council

**Kentucky**

Technology Association of Louisville  
Kentucky (TALK)

**Missouri**

KC Tech Council

**Massachusetts**

Massachusetts Technology Leadership  
Council (MassTLC)

**Maryland**

Maryland Tech Council (MTC)

**Minnesota**

MnTech

**Montana**

Montana High-Tech Business Alliance

**New Hampshire**

NH Tech Alliance

**New Jersey**

New Jersey Tech Council (NJTC)

**New York**

Tech Rochester

**Nevada**

Nevada Technology Association

**New Mexico**

New Mexico Technology Council (NMTC)

**North Carolina**

North Carolina Technology Association (NC  
TECH)

**North Dakota**

Technology Council of North Dakota

**Ohio**

GCP Tech  
Ohio IT Association

**Oregon**

Technology Association of Oregon (TAO)

**Pennsylvania**

Philadelphia Alliance for Capital and  
Technologies (PACT)  
Pittsburgh Technology Council  
Tech Council of Central Pennsylvania

**Rhode Island**

Tech Collective

**South Carolina**

Tech Association of South Carolina

**Tennessee**

Chattanooga Technology Council  
Greater Nashville Technology Council  
Knoxville Technology Council

**Texas**

Tech Titans

**Utah**

Utah Technology Council

**Virginia**

Northern Virginia Technology Council  
Roanoke-Blacksburg Technology Council

**Washington**

Washington Technology Industry  
Association (WTIA)

**Wisconsin**

Wisconsin Technology Council