

**National League of Cities  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors**

July 15, 2014

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

The National League of Cities (NLC), the National Association of Counties (NACo), and the National Association of Telecommunications Officers and Advisors (NATOA) strongly urges you to **oppose** any amendment to HR 5016 that would hamstring the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) from taking any action on – indeed, even discussing – the issue of state laws that prohibit or restrict public and public/private broadband projects. It is clear that such laws harm both the public and private sectors, stifle economic growth, prevent the creation or retention of thousands of jobs, and hamper work force development.

The United States must compete in a global economy in which affordable access to advanced communications networks is playing an increasingly significant role. As the FCC noted in challenging broadband providers and state and municipal community leaders to come together to develop at least one gigabit community in all 50 states by 2015: “The U.S. needs a critical mass of gigabit communities nationwide so that innovators can develop next-generation applications and services that will drive economic growth and global competitiveness.” This is especially true in rural America.

The private sector alone cannot enable the United States to take full advantage of the opportunities that advanced communications networks can create in virtually every area of life. As a result, federal, state, and local efforts are taking place across the Nation to deploy both private and public broadband infrastructure to stimulate and support economic development and job creation, especially in economically distressed areas. But such efforts are being thwarted in some areas by State laws that prohibit or restrict municipalities from working with private broadband providers, or developing themselves, if necessary, the advanced broadband infrastructure that will stimulate local businesses development, foster work force retraining, and boost employment in economically underachieving areas.

Consistent with these expressions of national unity, public entities across America are ready, willing, and able to do their share to bring affordable high-capacity broadband connectivity to all Americans. State barriers to public broadband are counterproductive to the achievement of these goals. Efforts to strip funding from the FCC to even discuss this issue, let alone take action, are misplaced and wrong. **Please oppose any amendment to HR 5016 or any other measure that could significantly impair community broadband deployments or public/private partnerships.**

Sincerely,

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