

May XX, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Chairwoman
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
425 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Energy & Commerce
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
512 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Investments in universal broadband access

Dear Chairwoman Cantwell, Chairman Pallone, and Ranking Members McMorris Rodgers and Wicker:

On behalf of a coalition of energy businesses, trade associations, researchers, energy officials, and advocacy organizations, we urge you to continue your leadership in securing high-speed broadband access for everyone, including polices that solve for middle mile broadband infrastructure development in rural parts of the country, and last mile high speed access where it does not exist. Solving for the middle and last miles is critical to the future of energy efficiency, as once static energy efficiency solutions become more dynamic, communicating with the consumer, manufacturers, utilities, and between appliances, including electric vehicles and in-home EV charging infrastructure.

Energy efficiency is our nation's most abundant – yet often overlooked – energy resource. In fact, according to a recent study by the Alliance to Save Energy and ACEEE, energy efficiency alone can reduce carbon emissions by 50% by 2050. Moreover, without the gains in energy efficiency made since 1973, the U.S. economy today would require at least 70% more energy than we currently consume. While broadband has not historically been considered an energy efficiency solution, the future of energy efficiency requires established and robust high-speed fiber optic infrastructure. In fact, broadband is the functional enabler of dynamic or active efficiency, allowing households, utilities, business, and government to share and balance load with minimal energy loss — significantly reducing energy consumption.

Absent solving for middle and last mile broadband, advanced energy technology infrastructure will not be available to optimize advanced technology-enhanced appliances, equipment, and products. As a result, large parts of the country, including urban, rural, and tribal communities will not be full participants in the future of energy, equaling slower carbon reductions and higher energy burdens. Low-income, rural households already have the highest energy burden in the country, spending 9% of household income on energy bills compared to the national average of 3.3%. Moreover, African Americans have an energy [burden 64% higher](#) than that of their white counterparts.

We urge your continued support for high-speed broadband infrastructure investments. For this reason, we hope that any investments in energy efficiency are accompanied by investments in broadband infrastructure, particularly in rural, low-income, and Tribal areas.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We stand ready to work with you as we prioritize energy efficiency to build a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous future for all Americans. For more information, please contact Vincent Barnes at vbarnes@ase.org.

Sincerely,
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