

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 29, 2009

The Honorable Michael Copps  
Acting Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

Ms. Bernadette McGuire-Rivera  
Associate Administrator  
National Telecommunications and Information Administration  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitute Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Mr. James R. Newby  
Acting Administrator  
Rural Development  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chairman Copps, Ms. McGuire-Rivera, and Mr. Newby:

Thank you for recognizing the role that broadband can play in stimulating the economy. We are pleased that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) included provisions that will expand broadband internet access and help link more Americans to the global economy.

While there is a strong focus in the ARRA on rural areas, we want to ensure that “underserved” urban areas are properly considered during the broadband grant process. Specifically, we request that low-income urban populations be considered as potentially “underserved” populations when you and your agencies develop the broadband grant programs and finalize the requirements for these programs.

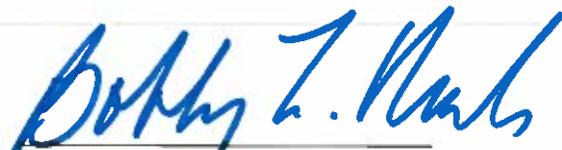
According to a July 2008 study by the PEW Internet and American Life Project, about 55% of all adult Americans have a high-speed internet connection at home. This number is up significantly from 47% in 2007. However, among low-income Americans broadband adoption actually declined while at the same time nearly one-third of broadband users paid more to get faster connections. Only 25% of low-income Americans, those whose household incomes are \$20,000 annually or less, reported having broadband at home in April 2008, down from 28% a year prior.

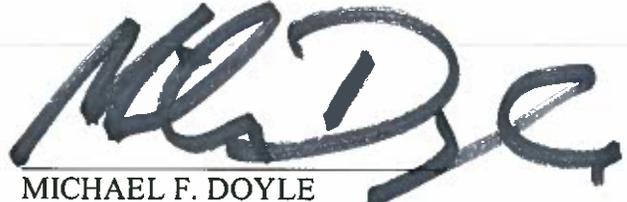
To fully close the digital divide we must address the affordability of broadband for many low-income families. Although these families may have several different options for broadband access, they are “underserved” if none of these options are affordable. It is our hope that the grant programs will address this population to ensure that all Americans have the chance to benefit from ubiquitous broadband services.

Thank you for your consideration.

  
DORIS O. MATSUI  
Member of Congress

  
EDWARD J. MARKEY  
Member of Congress

  
BOBBY L. RUSH  
Member of Congress

  
MICHAEL F. DOYLE  
Member of Congress

  
KATHY CASTOR  
Member of Congress

  
DONNA M. CHRISTENSEN  
Member of Congress

  
DIANA DeGETTE  
Member of Congress