

The Potential Effects of the National Broadband Plan on Rural Communities



National Broadband Plan

What is it?

- The National Broadband Plan is the FCC's response to a congressional mandate to assure every American household has access to robust and affordable broadband services
 - The Plan is a blue print for future broadband policy; it is not yet a series of rules
- The Plan, as written, will hinder rather than advance broadband service in rural America
 - It is not too late to positively affect the Plan's rule making procedures!

National Broadband Plan Harmful to Rural Subscribers

- The Plan discriminates against rural consumers
 - Sets broadband speed standards for rural communities that are 25 times slower than those in city and urban areas
 - Substantially cuts federal support to rural telephone companies
 - Forces rural telephone companies to adopt a regulatory system that has a poor track record of promoting investment in rural areas
 - Neglects fiber optic infrastructure vital to the advancement of both wireline and wireless broadband services

National Broadband Plan Harmful to Rural Subscribers

- The Plan's shortcomings may:
 - Sharply increase consumer rates
 - Place rural communities at an economic disadvantage (e.g., limit job growth)
 - Reduce educational opportunities (e.g., distance learning)
 - Threaten consumer welfare (e.g., rural health care)
 - Limit rural consumer's use of many current and future internet applications and services

National Broadband Plan

What is being done about it?

- National and state rural telecommunications associations have joined forces to:
 - Draw attention to harmful provisions of the Plan
 - Work with the FCC to identify constructive, less harmful alternatives to achieving national broadband goals
 - Brief congress and other policy makers and solicit their support
 - Educate consumers and other stakeholders and assist them with their advocacy efforts

National Broadband Plan

What can you do to help?

- Get personally involved!
- Reach out to state and local government leaders and discuss what the Plan will mean to rural Americans
- Write to the FCC and Congress
 - Amend the Plan to support continued rural investment
 - Demand access to broadband services comparable to those in city and urban areas