




**National Rural Electric  
Cooperative Association**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



May 30, 2012

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1011 Longworth House  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
235 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Members of Congress:

As organizations representing rural America, we seek to improve access to high speed broadband in rural communities. The first decade of the 21st century has come and gone, and in 2012 too many of the communities we serve have inadequate telecommunications service. Without robust broadband, small towns are losing businesses, farmers are missing opportunities to reach new markets, rural school children are lagging behind their urban peers, and America is slowly but surely losing many of the rural places that enrich our national economy and culture.

While we recognize and appreciate the efforts of Congress and the administration to address the widening gap between urban areas, which have many telecommunications options, and rural places, which have few, the current strategies and approaches could be improved. We are thinking creatively about how to solve these challenges. We are ready, willing and able to partner with local citizens, government at all levels, and telecommunications service providers large and small.

We write today to ask for your help and rededication to the cause of ensuring that high speed broadband reaches everyone as soon as possible. While we understand that comprehensive telecommunications legislation is unlikely to coalesce in the remaining months of the 112th Congress, we have identified two action areas where Congress can be proactive:

1. Strongly encourage federal agencies and our military to cooperate with the Federal Communications Commission to catalog spectrum and plan for the most efficient use of available and potentially available spectrum. As long as, GPS is protected, this could possibly include strategic swaps of spectrum for the purpose of strengthening broadband build out to rural America.
2. Reauthorize and adequately fund the Rural Utilities Service Broadband Loan Program.

These steps will help to fully connect rural America with the network through which our new national economy runs. We look forward to working with you to ensure this goal is accomplished.

Sincerely,

cc: Members of the U.S. House of Representatives  
Members of the U.S. Senate  
Federal Communications Commissioners