

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

June 17, 2015

Dear Chairman Wheeler and Commissioners Clyburn, Rosenworcel, Pai, and O’Rielly:

Our communities represent a cross-section of American towns and cities, large and small, urban and rural, from across the country. Yet in spite of our numerous differences, we are united by a common conviction that high-quality broadband Internet access is necessary infrastructure for the 21st century, as essential as good roads and reliable electricity. We know that fast, affordable, and reliable next-generation Internet networks are the key to building and sustaining thriving communities.

To help our communities access these critical opportunities, we have joined the city-to-city collaborative Next Century Cities, which supports local efforts to provide these networks. We are working to provide the high-quality Internet that is essential to thriving communities and remain deeply appreciative of the Commission’s ongoing efforts to safeguard the principle of local choice and empower more communities to achieve high-speed broadband Internet.

However, efforts to develop this core infrastructure are impeded when our citizens are unable to accurately gauge the quality and speed of their Internet. A recent report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), entitled “BROADBAND PERFORMANCE: Additional Actions Could Help FCC Evaluate its Efforts to Inform Consumers,” has shed light on difficulties faced by consumers in obtaining this information and suggests steps your institution can take to help change these practices.

In theory, consumers should be able to compare their broadband options. While your commission requires Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to report their broadband performance, the GAO report found that ISPs are not required to report this information in a standardized way. This means that consumers trying to compare internet speed information are too often unable to make accurate comparisons. Compounding this issue, the technical language used in FCC reports makes this material tricky for consumers to understand.

Reliable information on performance is necessary to ensure that consumers can make informed decisions, drive competition, and incentivize faster, more reliable broadband service.

That is why we collectively ask that the Commission consider the findings and recommendations of the GAO, and work with ISPs and other stakeholders in developing uniform standards to allow easy and accurate assessment of Internet speeds.

As the report found, elements of this new and more effective assessment of broadband networks should include:

- Universal standards required by ISPs for measuring broadband network speed and reliability incorporating readily-available information from sources such as consumer research; and

- More accessible reports and resources on network performance from the FCC, directed at general readership.

Implementing these elements could be easily achieved through helpful actions, such as creating an easily-accessible database comparing performances of competing networks in a geographic region, and by convening an advisory panel of state and local leaders, as well as community advocates, to help curate and present the information to the general public and assess the success of these educational efforts.

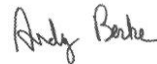
As broadband Internet becomes increasingly critical to the well-being of towns and cities across the country, being able to reliably measure and compare network performance will help to ensure that we, as elected leaders, are delivering the essential infrastructure our communities need.

We thank the Commission for its tireless work in assisting the deployment of high-speed broadband networks, and we look forward to more accessible and effective information on broadband performance for our citizens.

Signed,



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Ammon, Idaho



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Mayor
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Mayor
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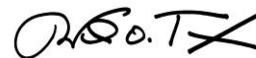
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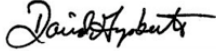
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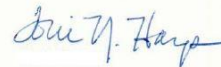
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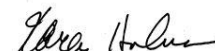
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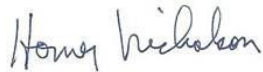
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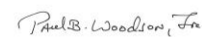
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