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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

December 17, 2009

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The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

As you develop recommendations for the National Broadband Plan, a valuable goal would be to ensure that all Americans, regardless of their income or location, have access to high-quality broadband services. To that end, the Commission's plan should promote substantially higher Internet speeds and higher capacity networks and should include two goals.

First, the Commission should seek universal availability of broadband. We must reduce the number of unserved households and substantially increase the broadband adoption rate as quickly as possible. We are well along in Congress in drafting legislation that can help further this important goal, as reflected in the Universal Service Reform Act under consideration by the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet. I would welcome any suggestions you might have beyond adoption of this legislation to advance this important goal, such as means to provide additional support to anchor institutions, libraries, research institutions, and community organizations.

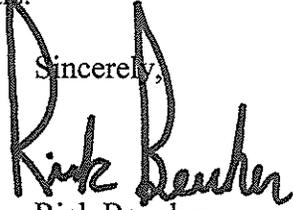
Second, the Commission should explicitly endorse a goal for minimum broadband speeds, of at least 50 megabits downstream and 20 megabits upstream for 80 percent of the population by 2015. Without committing to such ambitious, but achievable, levels of speed and service, the promises of telemedicine, distance learning and telecommuting may remain a far-off dream rather than a near-term reality. If we fail to achieve such a goal, our nation will likely remain well behind other industrialized countries that are racing ahead and gaining a competitive advantage by doing so.

If we are ambitious enough, the United States could again rank first internationally in providing competitive, high-speed broadband service to households and businesses throughout the nation. Absent adoption of an ambitious goal, it could take the United States more than a decade to match current broadband speeds in, for example,

South Korea. Accordingly, the development of accelerated broadband speeds as standard offerings for consumers is an essential part of the foundation for the nation's long-term economic stability and prosperity.

I look forward to receiving your recommendations and working with you and your colleagues to advance our shared goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Boucher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "R" at the beginning.

Rick Boucher
Member of Congress



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

March 2, 2010

The Honorable Rick Boucher
Chairman
Subcommittee on Communications, Technology,
and the Internet
Committee on Energy and Commerce
316 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Boucher:

Thank you for your letter regarding the implementation of the National Broadband Plan to promote universal availability and access to high-quality broadband for all Americans. I value your insights and recommendations.

I am in complete agreement that we must ensure universal availability of broadband access, and that we should put in place a comprehensive blueprint for high levels of broadband service speeds over the next several years. In this respect, the Commission is evaluating public, private, and cooperative efforts of all sorts and is considering short, medium, and long-term actions to improve universal service programs. We are also assessing our experience with the Rural Health Care programs to refine such initiatives to expand affordable broadband connectivity more effectively. Through these programs and other efforts, we hope to close the gaps on universal broadband availability and adoption.

The second goal you recommend is to establish ambitious, but achievable benchmarks for broadband service speeds. I agree that setting such benchmarks is an important component of developing an effective broadband plan. I have recently suggested that our aspirational high speed goal should be affordable broadband access to 100 million homes by 2020, at a minimum speed of 100 Mbps. It is essential that we aspire to meet the broadband infrastructure needs of the future. As you mention, these networks will be the foundation for the nation's long-term economic stability and prosperity.

I appreciate your views and input on this matter, and I will make your letter a part of the record in the Commission's open docket regarding its development of a National Broadband Plan. I look forward to working with you as the Commission undertakes the development of a broadband plan that can serve our nation for years to come. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julius Genachowski".

Julius Genachowski