



For Immediate Release

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ACA: SMALL, MID-SIZED CABLE OPERATORS ARE KEY TO RURAL BROADBAND STRATEGY

Federal Plan Should Leverage Resources Of Experienced Providers

PITTSBURGH, March 26, 2009 — The American Cable Association, in a filing Wednesday evening ([available here](#)), urged the Federal Communications Commission to adopt a rural broadband strategy that relies on small and mid-sized operators as chief recipients of federal grants and loans to close the broadband gap in rural areas of the country.

"Federal agencies should give weight to existing broadband providers that already serve smaller markets and rural areas during the application process for broadband grants and loans," ACA president and CEO Matthew Polka said. "This is the best way to maximize the investment return on taxpayer dollars."

Under the 2008 Farm Bill, the FCC Chairman, in consultation with the Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, is required to develop a comprehensive rural broadband strategy in a report to Congress due on May 22. The report is likely to help inform the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the Agriculture Department's Rural Utilities Service in the disbursement of \$7.2 billion in new broadband loans and grants by Sept. 30, 2010.

ACA's comments emphasized that projects to construct last-mile and middle-mile infrastructure should be eligible for funding as doing so would extend high-speed Internet service into sparsely populated areas that have been either economically challenging or impossible to serve.

"ACA members are uniquely situated to help achieve the goals of a rural broadband strategy, and stand ready to help develop a plan that ensures all Americans have access to vital high-speed Internet services," Polka said.

In the filing, ACA said a grant-and-loan program should be open and transparent, following a streamlined application process for small and medium-sized cable operators or those requesting relatively minimal funding. ACA added that the program should also give consideration to entities that have the financial, managerial, operational, and technical experience running broadband networks in smaller markets and rural areas.

“Entities that offer or have offered broadband can leverage existing networks and resources to maximize the benefits of any broadband grant,” Polka said.

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About the American Cable Association

Based in Pittsburgh, the American Cable Association is a trade organization representing more than 900 smaller and medium-sized, independent cable companies who provide broadband services for more than 7 million cable subscribers primarily located in rural and smaller suburban markets across America. Through active participation in the regulatory and legislative process in Washington, D.C., ACA's members work together to advance the interests of their customers and ensure the future competitiveness and viability of their business. For more information, visit <http://www.americancable.org/>