



ADVANCING GLOBAL COMMUNICATIONS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) Supports Passage of Farm Bill Conference Report

Provisions Dovetail with TIA's Vision for Broadband Deployment in Rural America

Washington, D.C. – The Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA), the leader in advocacy, standards development, business development and intelligence for the information and communications technology (ICT) industry, today applauded Congress for passing The Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008, which includes provisions advancing the deployment of broadband in rural America.

The conference report, passed by the House of Representatives by a vote of 318 to 106 yesterday and by the Senate by a vote of 81 to 15 today, includes provisions reauthorizing and strengthening the Rural Utilities Service's (RUS) broadband loan program. Specifically, the bill directs the Secretary of Agriculture to review and recommend modifications to criteria, including transmission speeds, for purposes of determining what is considered broadband, and requires that such recommendations be made on a "technologically neutral" basis. The conference report authorizes \$25 million for each fiscal year 2008-2012 to implement the RUS program.

"We are pleased that the Conference Report places a priority on broadband loan applications which would serve communities with greatest need. The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) broadband loan program provides a key incentive for nationwide broadband build-out, particularly in rural and underserved America," said TIA President Grant Seiffert. "Further, this money has a positive, significant impact not only on those who will finally experience the benefits of two-way, high speed voice, video and data communications, but also on the manufacturers and suppliers of communications equipment and services who contribute to the job creation, equipment sales, the development of new services and technical innovations as a result of the loans."

TIA also hails the inclusion of reporting requirements that will assess current broadband loan programs, as well as a provision requiring the Chairman of the FCC in coordination with the Secretary of Agriculture to submit to Congress a report describing a comprehensive rural broadband strategy. TIA has long-advocated for a national broadband strategy that will ensure the ubiquitous deployment of next-generation broadband networks, which directly impact the productivity of our industries and our economy, and pivotally affect public safety, education, health care, and countless other functions in our daily lives.

“Next-generation broadband capabilities,” said Seiffert, “will equip every person with the tools necessary to compete in the 21st century, increasing productivity, improving standard of living, and enhancing economic and physical security.”

For more information about TIA’s government affairs initiatives, please contact Danielle Coffey at dcoffey@tiaonline.org. For information about TIA, please contact Taly Walsh at twalsh@tiaonline.org.

About TIA

Currently in its 84th year, the Telecommunications Industry Association (TIA) represents the global information and communications technology (ICT) industry through standards development, advocacy, business opportunities, market intelligence and world-wide environmental regulatory compliance. Thousands of companies and individuals work through TIA to enhance the business environment for telecommunications, broadband, mobile wireless, information technology, networks, cable, satellite, unified communications, emergency communications and the greening of technology. TIA is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

TIA’s Board of Directors includes senior-level executives from ACS, ADC, ADTRAN, Alcatel-Lucent, ANDA Networks, ArrayComm, AttivaCorp, Avaya, Bechtel Communications, Inc., Cam Communications, Cisco Systems, Corning Incorporated, Ericsson, Inc., Graybar, Henkels & McCoy, Intel Corporation, LGE, Microsoft, Motorola, Nokia Siemens Networks, Nortel, OneChip Photonics Inc., OnSite Systems, Panasonic Computer Solutions Co., Research In Motion, Sumitomo Electric Lightwave Corporation, Tellabs, Tyco Electronics, Ulticom, Inc., Westell Technologies, Inc. and Zebra Technologies Corporation. Advisors to the Board include FAL Associates, ILS Technology, Orca Systems and Telcordia Technologies.

TIA membership enhances the ability of companies to prepare for the future of communications. TIA brings people and businesses together by helping the industry overcome technical and political barriers to communications. Visit www.tiaonline.org for details.

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