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June 24, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S 221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus  
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee  
United States Senate  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Chairman Baucus,

On behalf of the Telecommunications Industry Association, I am writing to convey our industry's concern about the inclusion of rescissions of "unobligated balances" from the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009" (PL 111-5) from the Department of Agriculture's "Distance Learning, Telemedicine and Broadband Program" and the Department of Commerce's "Broadband Technology Opportunities Program" in the recently released Baucus Amendment in the nature of a substitute to H.R. 4213.

The Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service's (RUS) Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP) was provided \$2.5 billion through the ARRA to offer grants, direct loans and loan grant combinations to help bring broadband services to rural unserved and underserved communities. While the first round of awards has been announced, the second round of applications is currently under review. Similarly, the Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) is also in the process of reviewing the second round of applications for funding. ARRA provided \$4.7 billion to NTIA to support the deployment of broadband infrastructure, enhance and expand public computer centers, encourage sustainable adoption of broadband service and to develop and maintain broadband maps of every state.

With both of these programs on track to meet the statutory requirement to obligate all of the funds by the end of this fiscal year, it is alarming that a proposal would be made at this late stage to remove funding from these efforts. Hundreds of organizations, companies and communities across America have spent time and precious resources to apply for these awards based on the availability of funds. To remove \$600 million from these programs would be detrimental to the stated goal of the Recovery Act – job creation, in addition to removing needed resources from the effort to bring broadband to millions of currently unserved and underserved Americans which will benefit these communities and the overall economy for years to come.

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 analysis. Members' products and services empower communications in every industry and market, including healthcare, education, security, public safety, transportation, government, the military, the environment and entertainment.

I applaud your commitment to the "extenders" package and have long supported the extension of one of the extenders in particular, the R&D Credit, but we have concerns with the use of these rescissions as offsets for this or as part of any other bill and urge you to reconsider their inclusion.



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I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of this issue.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Grant E. Seiffert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Grant Seiffert  
President