

June 4, 2020

Vince Malta
2020 President

Bob Goldberg
Chief Executive Officer

ADVOCACY GROUP

William E. Malkasian
Chief Advocacy Officer / SVP

Shannon McGahn
SVP Government Affairs

The Honorable James E. Clyburn
U.S. House of Representatives
200 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton
U.S. House of Representatives
2183 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Clyburn and Upton:

On behalf of the 1.4 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), I write to thank you for introducing the Rural Broadband Acceleration Act (H.R. 7022), bipartisan legislation that recognizes the need for immediate investment in broadband.

The COVID-19 outbreak has highlighted the critical need for every U.S. home to have access to high-speed broadband services. Broadband connectivity is critical in a 21st century economy. It allows individuals the ability to work from home, children to learn, small businesses to thrive, and property values to increase. Unfortunately, this essential service is unavailable to millions of Americans, particularly in rural areas. Broadband deployment can take time, is expensive, and is often hampered by red tape and bureaucracy.

The Rural Broadband Acceleration Act will begin to immediately address our nation's connectivity issues by directing the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to fund hundreds of high-speed rural broadband projects that are ready to deploy today. Specifically, the bill directs the FCC to accelerate the deployment of funds to bidders in the upcoming Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) that commit to: 1) build a gigabit tier broadband network; 2) begin construction within 6 months of receiving funding; and 3) provide internet service within a year. This legislation also contains provisions to expedite the FCC's work of updating its broadband service maps. With more precise data, federal agencies can target funding to areas that need it most.

NAR has long supported the need to expand broadband capability to the entire United States. Like many other businesses, real estate is increasingly being conducted online. Streaming video, virtual tours, voice-over-internet-protocol, interactive transaction management systems and wireless smart phones are just some of the technologies that are commonly used by REALTORS® today. In the future, new technologies will be adopted that will only increase our members' reliance on the availability of fast, efficient and cost-effective access to broadband services.



This health crisis has heightened the awareness of how important it is to deploy broadband as quickly as possible. We thank you for your efforts to bring broadband benefits to those living in rural America and look forward to continuing to work with you on closing the digital divide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vince Malta". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "M".

Vince Malta

2020 President, National Association of REALTORS®