

**June 30, 2020**

The Honorable Roger Wicker  
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Vince Malta**  
2020 President

**Bob Goldberg**  
Chief Executive Officer

**ADVOCACY GROUP**

**William E. Malkasian**  
Chief Advocacy Officer / SVP

**Shannon McGahn**  
SVP Government Affairs

Dear Senator Wicker:

On behalf of the 1.4 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), I thank you for your leadership advancing efforts to deploy broadband in rural America, and for introducing the Accelerating Broadband Connectivity Act.

The need for broadband has become essential to daily life as more activities move online. This has become particularly apparent during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, as many employers have transitioned their workers from on-site work to telework and schools have transitioned students to distance learning. The problem is especially dire in rural areas, where lack of funding and burdensome regulations have contributed to slow broadband deployment. Roughly 21 million Americans, many in rural areas, still cannot connect to the Internet, and, in many instances, it is too slow and too expensive for the households who do have access.

The Accelerating Broadband Connectivity Act strengthens the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund Auction and incentivizes bidders to expeditiously deploy broadband buildout in underserved communities. The Rural Digital Opportunity Fund is an important tool to help guarantee access to broadband, regardless of location. By strengthening the program and providing additional resources, this legislation will assist in meeting the connectivity needs of millions of Americans living in rural areas.

NAR has long supported the need to expand broadband capability to the entire United States. High-speed internet is a crucial tool for economic development, and is an important factor that can help convince businesses and families to locate in rural areas. Broadband not only adds to the value of a property, but it shows up throughout real estate transactions. Consumers increasingly use online services for at least a part of the buying or selling process. 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



Vince Malta  
2020 President, National Association of REALTORS®

cc: The Honorable Marsha Blackburn  
The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito

