NAR Issue Summaries

Technologies / Broadband Access

NAR Committee:

Federal Technology Policy Committee

What is the fundamental issue?

Millions of homes across the U.S. continue to lack access to high-speed internet, or “broadband,” limiting economic opportunity, community growth, and the dream of homeownership.

I am a real estate professional. What does this mean for my business?

Broadband is nowcritical infrastructure, like electricity or water, and a must-have feature for today’s buyers. Homes without it:

- Stay on the market longer
- Sell for less
- Get fewer showings

Broadband also expands the pool of marketable homes by enablingremote work and location flexibility. Without it, entire communities are left behind—not just in housing, but in access to education, healthcare, and opportunity.

NAR Policy:

Every American should have access to reliable, affordable, high-speed internet.

Opposition Arguments:

Opponents of federal legislation argue that markets should determine how broadband is deployed. Others counter that millions of Americans still lack basic access, limiting economic growth and opportunity in underserved communities.

Legislative/Regulatory Status/Outlook

Since COVID-19, Congress has appropriated billions to expand broadband, yet millions of Americans in rural and underserved communities still lack access to reliable high-speed internet. Congress’s focus has shifted from broadband funding to implementation and oversight:

- **Infrastructure:** In 2021, Congress created the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program to fund broadband infrastructure through state-administered grants. Now in implementation, the program has drawn concern that funding is not yet translating into on-the-ground broadband buildout, prompting several bipartisan House and Senate bills aimed at

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streamlining permitting, improving transparency, and strengthening program accountability, as described below.

- **Mapping:** The 2020 Broadband DATA Act improved FCC broadband mapping. A public challenge process and continued congressional oversight are helping ensure funds reach truly unserved areas. However, BEAD relies heavily on these maps, and challenges to coverage determinations can delay project awards.
- **Affordability:** The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which subsidized broadband for low-income households, expired in 2024 after funding was not renewed. While bipartisan proposals have been introduced to revive the program, those efforts have not yet gained traction.

NAR continues to work with Congress and federal agencies to expand broadband access while ensuring that funding is spent efficiently, cost-effectively, and in ways that maximize impact for communities and the housing market.

Current Legislation/Regulation (bill number or regulation)

H.R. 1343 – Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act: Requires NTIA to develop a system to track and improve transparency of federal broadband permitting applications; passed the House by voice vote and sent to the Senate.

H.R. 1681 – Expediting Federal Broadband Deployment Reviews Act: Establishes an interagency strike force to accelerate federal permitting for broadband projects on public lands; passed the House (384–9) and sent to the Senate.

S. 98 – Rural Broadband Protection Act of 2025: Requires the FCC to vet broadband providers receiving Universal Service Fund support and strengthen accountability for buildout obligations; signed into law (Public Law 119-89).

S. 323 - PLAN for Broadband Act: Directs NTIA to develop a national strategy to better coordinate federal broadband programs and streamline permitting on federal lands; reported out of committee and awaiting Senate floor consideration.

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