



June 8, 2006

The Honorable Gil Gutknecht
U.S. House of Representatives
425 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bart Stupak
U.S. House of Representatives
2352 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Allen Boyd
U.S. House of Representatives
1227 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Peterson
U.S. House of Representatives
123 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ike Skelton
U.S. House of Representatives
2206 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Stephanie Herseth
U.S. House of Representatives
331 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Gutknecht, Stupak, Boyd, Herseth, Peterson and Skelton:

As a coalition representing millions of rural consumers and over 700 independent telecommunications companies, we are writing in support of your bipartisan amendment to the Communications Opportunity, Promotion, and Enhancement (COPE) Act of 2006 proposed on behalf of the Congressional Rural Caucus (CRC). We strongly applaud your effort to ensure that consumers everywhere will benefit from this important proposal and thank you for working with your colleagues to adopt this amendment when it is considered on the House floor.

Access to affordable communication services is critical to the vitality and competitiveness of our country and the consumers we serve. The Gutknecht-Stupak amendment would ensure that all consumers receive fair and affordable access to our nation's communication network by protecting the ability of the Federal Communications Commission and States to require all providers that use the network to contribute to the Universal Service Fund and pay appropriate compensation for carriage of their voice traffic. Your amendment will not only make sure that carriers are compensated for all traffic that utilizes their networks, but will ensure that consumers continue to receive the many benefits of a robust and ubiquitous network.

We welcome the opportunity to continue to work with you, and your colleagues to ensure that all communities have access to affordable telecommunications and broadband services.

Sincerely,

Coalition to Keep America Connected