



NARUC
National Association of Regulatory
Utility Commissioners

For Immediate Release

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NARUC Supports Bipartisan ‘Broadband Acceleration Act’ to Expedite Rollout of Broadband Networks

Program Funded by the FCC’s October 2020 \$16 Billion Auction

WASHINGTON (May 28, 2020) — The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners has endorsed bipartisan legislation introduced today by Representatives James Clyburn (D-SC) and Fred Upton (R-MI) to reform the procedures for the pending Federal Communications Commission’s Phase I Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction slated to begin October 22, 2020. The auction will award \$16 billion over 10 years to fund the buildout of broadband in census blocks that are entirely unserved by voice and broadband, providing download speeds of at least 25 Mbps. The Broadband Acceleration Act (H.R. 7022) rapidly expedites awarding funds, as well as the start of construction and service for symmetrical gigabit service and provides for improvements of existing coverage maps.

“This bill is a common sense, bipartisan approach to getting serious action on broadband deployment in America. Red tape and unnecessary delays are the very opposite of what Americans living in the digital divide need at this critical time,” said NARUC President Brandon Presley, who sits on the Mississippi Public Service Commission. “Accelerating RDOF existing funds is the right thing to do and the time is now. With respect to the pending FCC auction procedures, this bill incentivizes real solutions to broadband deployment that doesn’t require one penny of new funds. NARUC also strongly supports the separate provision that provides funds to speed up the maps used to target scarce federal broadband subsidies. Anyone serious about fixing the broadband crisis in this nation should support this wholeheartedly. It’s time to quit throwing good money after bad and actually do something for disconnected Americans. Reps. Clyburn and Upton have created a pathway for immediate action and I hope Congress will move quickly to get Americans connected sooner rather than later by passing this bill quickly.”

NARUC also urges Congress to make certain that the FCC conditions funds to require both construction and service within a year of the awards. Whether the current health and economic crises last a few months or a year, the Association believes that funding on long-term rural fiber networks will be money well spent.

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About NARUC

NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC’s member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of state public utility commissions before the three branches of the federal government.