

## THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

### RESOLUTION CALLING ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO MAXIMIZE STIMULUS SUPPORT FOR BROADBAND INTERNET USE AND ADOPTION

#### Resolution Summary

Congress and the Federal Communications Commission should adopt a national broadband policy that focuses on promoting *adoption and use* of broadband technologies by all Americans regardless of race, income, or age to help non-adopters overcome societal barriers to adoption: low levels of income and educational attainment, lack of computer ownership in the home, and a perceived lack of relevant content. Studies from the Pew Internet & American Life Project have shown that roughly half of the 37% of Americans who do not subscribe to broadband today are unaware of how the technology can be of practical use to them.

The facts are very clear: Over 90% of U.S. households are able to access at least one wireline broadband service, and 98% of Americans live in a zip code served by two or more providers. What is also clear, however, is that while broadband adoption is clearly on the rise, only 63% of households now have broadband in the home. For certain demographic groups, the adoption rate is well below 50%. This indicates that there are other barriers that need to be addressed.

This resolution asks CSG to call upon the federal agencies who oversee the distribution of broadband funding included in the ARRA to expressly mandate that broadband awareness, adoption, use, and digital literacy programs receive funding priority. It also calls upon the federal agencies implementing the broadband funding included in the ARRA to follow Congress' clear legislative intent with respect to broadband adoption, use, and digital literacy treat the mandated minimum expenditure of \$250 million for these purposes as a threshold level with a maximum limited only by the size of the broadband stimulus program itself.

If adopted, the resolution be forwarded to members of Congress, the Administration, and the relevant federal agencies implementing the broadband funding programs including but not limited to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the Rural Utilities Service. It also calls for all levels of governments to work cooperatively with the private sector, nonprofits, and academia to develop robust broadband awareness, adoption, and use programs.

### **Additional Resource Information**

- The following organizations have adopted similar policy resolutions:
  - National Lieutenant Governors Association
  - National Association of Counties
  - American Legislative Exchange Council
  - National Black Caucus of State Legislators
  - National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
  - National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials
  - National Caucus of Hispanic Legislators
  - National Association of Black County Officials
  - Women in Municipal Government

### **CSG Management Directives**

**Management Directive #1:** The Council of State Governments calls upon the federal agencies distributing the broadband funding included in the ARRA to expressly mandate that broadband awareness, adoption, use, and digital literacy programs receive funding priority.

**Management Directive #2:** The Council of State Governments calls upon the federal agencies implementing the broadband funding included in the ARRA to follow Congress' clear legislative intent with respect to broadband adoption, use, and digital literacy treat the mandated minimum expenditure of \$250 million for these purposes as a threshold level with a maximum limited only by the size of the broadband stimulus program itself.

**Management Directive #3:** The Council of State Governments calls upon all levels of governments to work cooperatively with the private sector, nonprofits, and academia to develop robust broadband awareness, adoption, and use programs.

**Management Directive #4:** CSG staff will forward this resolution to members of Congress, the Administration, and the relevant federal agencies implementing the broadband funding programs including, but not limited to, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the Rural Utilities Service.

**Management Directive #5:** CSG staff will post approved resolution on CSG's website and make available through its regular communication venues at the state and local level to ensure its distribution to the state government and policy community.

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**WHEREAS**, among the approximately 92 percent of American households that have access to broadband Internet services, only about 61 percent of U.S. households subscribe;

**WHEREAS**, research shows that a “lack of interest” in broadband is one of the main reasons certain populations do not seek out broadband services;

**WHEREAS**, research also shows that many non-broadband households view broadband as being either irrelevant or difficult to use, and nearly half of the population that does not subscribe to broadband says it does not need such a connection;

**WHEREAS**, Americans that do not have broadband at home are disproportionately lower-income and older than average and fewer than one-quarter of such Americans have broadband at home;

**WHEREAS**, the Council of State Governments believes that widespread efforts to promote broadband adoption, use, and digital literacy are critical to improving the nation’s long-term competitiveness in a global market, and to achieving certain socioeconomic improvements in the quality of American life;

**WHEREAS**, expanding adoption, use and digital literacy skills will allow a greater number of Americans to fully take advantage of the benefits of broadband based applications such as tele-health, energy management and education opportunities online; and

**WHEREAS**, the broadband funding programs established in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) dedicate significant resources to promoting broadband awareness, adoption, use, and digital literacy by these populations.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that The Council of State Governments calls upon the federal agencies distributing the broadband funding included in the ARRA to expressly mandate that broadband awareness, adoption, use, and digital literacy programs receive funding priority;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that The Council of State Governments calls upon the federal agencies implementing the broadband funding included in the ARRA to follow Congress’ clear legislative intent with respect to broadband adoption, use, and digital literacy treat the mandated minimum expenditure of \$250 million for these purposes as a threshold level with a maximum limited only by the size of the broadband stimulus program itself.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution be forwarded to members of Congress, the Administration, and the relevant federal agencies implementing the broadband funding programs

including but not limited to the National Telecommunications and Information Administration and the Rural Utilities Service.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that The Council of State Governments calls upon all levels of governments to work cooperatively with the private sector, nonprofits, and academia to develop robust broadband awareness, adoption, and use programs.

Adopted this \_\_\_\_Day of November, 2009 at the CSG Annual Conference in La Quinta, California

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Governor Joe Manchin III, West Virginia  
2009 CSG President

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Sen. Bart Davis, Idaho  
2009 CSG Chair

