USTELECOM | THE BROADBAND ASSOCIATION

JONATHAN SPALTER
President and Chief Executive Officer

October 21, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Johnson and Leaders Thune, Jeffries, and Schumer:

On behalf of USTelecom – The Broadband Association and the companies that build and operate America's communications networks, I urge Congress to address three critical broadband priorities before the end of the year: make explicit broadband's inclusion in permitting reform, support investment in modern and secure networks alongside long-term reauthorization of the Cybersecurity Information Sharing Act of 2015 (CISA 2015), and provide clarity and certainty to the administration of the Universal Service Fund (USF).

America's broadband networks connect communities, power our economy, and underpin our nation's global competitive edge. Maintaining U.S. technological leadership requires policies that accelerate deployment, encourage investment in next-generation infrastructure, strengthen cybersecurity, and preserve universal connectivity.

Explicitly Include Broadband in Permitting Reform

We welcome congressional efforts to advance permitting reform and urge lawmakers to explicitly reaffirm that broadband infrastructure is included in the package's streamlined processes. That clarity is important to the thousands of Americans waiting for fast, reliable fiber internet connectivity. Providers continue to face federal permitting delays of two years or more, including a three-year delay simply to repair an existing fiber line. Clear eligibility for permitting improvements will help move these projects forward.

Congress should streamline environmental and historic reviews for broadband projects, establish enforceable permitting deadlines, and direct the Department of the Interior to create a dedicated broadband permitting office, similar to the existing broadband coordination efforts of the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. Congress should also advance the bipartisan Broadband and Telecommunications RAIL Act (H.R. 6046) to address excessive delays and costs associated with railroad crossings by establishing predictable approval timelines and reasonable fees. Together, these commonsense reforms would accelerate broadband deployment while preserving important environmental, historic, and public safety protections.

Advance Network Modernization and Cybersecurity

Maintaining American innovation and leadership requires sustained investment in modern networks and new technologies. Replacing aging infrastructure and addressing legacy technology and technical debt will strengthen resilience and reduce potential weaknesses, particularly as AI enables foreign adversaries to identify and exploit vulnerabilities more quickly. Network modernization is essential to effective cybersecurity.

Our communications infrastructure must be supported by strong public-private cybersecurity cooperation. CISA 2015 provides essential legal protections for broadband providers to share cyber threat information with government and industry partners. Congress should reauthorize it for the long term so these partnerships can continue protecting our critical communications networks.

Provide Certainty for Rural Connectivity

The Fifth Circuit Court's recent decision concerning the FCC's authority to establish USAC underscores the need for a durable, sustainable, and modern universal service system. Congress should bring clarity and certainty to the administration of the USF as it looks to modernize these critical programs to meet America's evolving connectivity needs.

We urge you to advance these three priorities before the close of this Congress. Together, they will accelerate broadband deployment, encourage investment in modern and secure networks, and ensure connectivity programs can serve Americans today and into the future.
We stand ready to work with you to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Spalter